Ecommerce SEO: How To Increase Traffic To Your Store

Let me ask you a question:

What's the difference between a successful e-commerce store and one that barely breaks even every month?

It's not the range of products it offers.

It's not the quality of its design either.

It's the way it attracts qualified traffic at scale.

From all the available marketing channels an e-commerce site owner has, SEO is on a completely different level.

Here's why:

Once you get your website to rank consistently, you can guarantee consistent sales for the long-term

<u>BUT:</u>

Ecommerce SEO is difficult and there's a lot you need to do right to make your website stand out in Google's search results.

Plus most people go about ecommerce SEO the wrong way by picking keywords with high search volumes.

So I am going to teach you everything there is about ecommerce SEO to take your store from the bottom, to the top of the search engines.

While other ecommerce SEO guides focus on the theory, I am going to tell you everything you need to know and how to do

it.

This means I will show you only what matters. There will be no fluff in this guide or topics that do not relate to ecommerce SEO in 2018, only *applicable, 100% field-tested tactics that work*.

These are the same tactics my team and I have personally implemented for my ecommerce clients and I'm going to guide you through them.

Why SEO Is Critical For Ecommerce Stores

I have heard people say that SEO doesn't apply to ecommerce and that Google will naturally pick them up and bring in new traffic.

This simply isn't true.

Because if your competition are optimizing their websites and you're not — the result?

They're taking ALL your traffic and customers and having put a number of my clients competitors out of business — you ignore SEO at your own peril.

Simply put if you're not taking ecommerce SEO seriously- you're losing money. Period.

However, It's not just the traffic you should care about. Traffic on its own doesn't necessarily translate into sales — I'm sure many of you can vouch for this.

It's the **money that people spend with you** that makes SEO so important.

Let's think about that for a second.

Say you wanted to rank #1 for the keyword *"gymnastic rings"* According to Ahrefs, that keyword has 3,700 searches a month in the United States.

Ranking #1 would result in an extra 2,100 visitors per month.

Assuming that 5% of that traffic converted, you'd make **105 sales a month**. If each sale was worth $25 to you, **you could generate $2,625**.

That'd represent **$31,500 worth of sales** a year for one keyword and one product alone!

The keyword *"gymnastic rings"* is a short-tail word, however. If you sold many types of gymnastic rings, you could use that keyword as your category.

If you targeted a more long-tail version of that keyword for specific products, like *"wooden gymnastic rings"*, *"best gymnastic rings"* or *"metal gymnastic rings"* you could probably **double**, or even **triple** the organic traffic together with your revenue.

That's the power of SEO for ecommerce.

SEO is a machine that pushes qualified traffic into your store. Traffic that converts. Traffic that puts money in your pocket.

Your aim should always be to increase the authority of your store, so you can rank all your pages better. But knowing where to start is a huge help!

Focus on your category pages first, and this is why:

Customers love to have the freedom to choose and explore their purchase. They want to see multiple products at different prices, with some good options. This can also help increase your AOV (average order value) across your website. So setting up category pages with a high ranking keyword is something

that will work well for the optimization and the authority of your store.

To do ecommerce SEO right, you must learn all the basics of it. Here's everything you need to know.

Start With An Ecommerce SEO Audit

Nearly every new ecommerce SEO client makes the same mistake. They want to get straight into executing a link building strategy without taking care of the on site SEO foundations.

That's like building a house without a blueprint.

You can do it, but it probably won't work out. You need to make sure your store doesn't have any on-site SEO problems before doing anything else.

Common problems include having a site that:

To make sure your store doesn't have any of these problems, you can avoid having a poorly optimized website by running through one of the best SEO audit tools: Screaming Frog.

You could also use the SEMRush or Ahrefs onsite audit tools as well if you don't have Screaming Frog already.

Here's how you do your ecommerce SEO audit step by step.

Ecommerce SEO Audit with Screaming Frog

To start, go to the Screaming Frog website and download their software. Screaming Frog is a tool you can use to crawl your entire site as if you were a Googlebot.

The best part is, it's free up to 500 URLs. If you need more, you will need to pay the yearly license for £149.

But trust me, this tool will pay for itself with how much of an advantage it gives you.

Let's say one of your clients was Chubbies, the men's shorts company. To start analyzing their site, I'd first take their main URL, and add it to Screaming Frog and hit the *"Start"* button.

Once the crawl is finished, export the results. To make the exported file simpler, I will first filter the results by HTML, so I can get only the pages and ignore the Javascript files and images, among other things-

What you see in front of you will be the dashboard to fixing all of our on site SEO problems.

Now is also a great time to save the project, just click on *File > Save* and we can move onto fixing the most common problems first.

Duplicate Content

I have never had an ecommerce SEO client that didn't suffer from huge amounts of duplicate content. That is when 2 or more pages have the same or very similar content.

This is often the cause of ecommerce SEO penalties like Panda and is one of the biggest negative SEO signals a site can have, so I like to take care of duplicate content first.

Although Screaming Frog is great at finding duplicate content I actually use a second free tool alongside Screaming Frog to make sure I go deep and catch everything.

So first let me show you how to find duplicate content with Screaming Frog.

Finding Duplicate Content With Screaming Frog

To find the pages with potential duplicate content issues, go to the URL tab in the second menu, and on filter, click *"Duplicate."*

This report shows you all the pages that have duplicate

content.

In this case, we can see the main cause of the duplicate content issue is the use of parameters-

Drilling down into this specific issue further, I can see that if they applied correct canonicalization tags — that would go a long way to fixing the issue.

But that's not the only duplicate content issue they have…

Finding Even More Duplicate Content With Siteliner

Go to Siteliner, and in the search box, add your website.

Siteliner will take a few minutes to analyze your whole site and give you a set of results.

Even though the tool analyzes you up to 250 URLs for free, it still gives a simple panoramic view of the internal links of your store.

Under "Your Top Issues" you will find the most pressing issues.

In the case of Chubbies, they seem to have many problems, so I clicked on the second link, and then on the link at the end of the message.

Once you do that, you will be shown the complete list of URLs organized by the number of words matching, the percentage, and the pages the content matches with.

To see what pages each URL matches with, click on each result.

It looks like during their Black Friday promotions they created lots of landing pages with very small variations which resulted in huge volumes of duplicate content.

Those duplicate pages should have had the noindex tag applied to them.

If you find many stances of duplicated content like we do here, go back and in the left column, click on *"Download Site Report."*

Then work your way through each duplicate content issue until they are all resolved. If you optimize your site by clearing out your duplicate content you have ticked off one of the key factors.

Find Missing Canonical Tags

It's easy for a page to have multiple URLs pointing to it, which cause duplicate content.

Much like in the example above that had kits if different versions of the same URL-

An easy solution to duplicate content like this is to define a canonical URL to each page; that is, the page that Google needs to consider as the "definitive" URL to crawl and rank.

To find whether your pages have canonical tags on them or not, go to the URL tab.

Scroll to the right, and see the "Canonical Link Element 1" column.

In this column, you can see the canonical URL that the rel="canonical" tag shows in the HTML of the page.

The pages with empty spaces have no canonical URL tag associated with it, which makes them more likely to have duplicated content.

Export the results and make sure to associate one URL with each page shown.

Missing or Duplicate Title Tags

Title tags are without a doubt the most important on-site element of your website. You need to make sure none of your

title tags are missing or duplicated.

To check on this issue, go to the Page Titles tab, select the "Missing" option, and export the results.

With all these pages, you want to add the respective title tags.

Repeat the previous process but click the "Duplicate" option.

Export the results, and with the pages that have duplicate title tags, make them unique.

It's also worth noting that Google currently displays up to roughly 65 characters. If you want to keep things looking clean in the SERPs, limit yourself to 65 characters.

Be sure to include a keyword in the page title too. This is huge!

If your page is about yellow shorts, then your page title might be *"The Best Yellow Shorts for Men – Chubbies"*

This really helps Google, and your customers, understand what this page is about. If you include irrelevant terms in the page title, people may not be happy with what they find on your page.

And if you really want to take your title tags to the next level, you should check out some of these SEO copywriting tips.

Missing or Duplicate Meta Descriptions

Even though meta descriptions don't have much SEO weight, they can help you increase your website's click-through-rate.

The process to find both the missing and duplicate meta descriptions is the same as the one you followed with the title tags.

First, go to the *Meta Description tab*, and filter the results by *"Missing"*.

Repeat the process by selecting the *"Duplicate"* filter.

Add relevant meta descriptions to the pages that miss them, and create unique ones to those that have duplicate descriptions.

The current recommendation is to reach between 200 – 320 characters in length, and since Google highlights the search query in your description – be sure to include keywords.

Again make sure you take advantage of these copywriting tips to attract as many clicks as possible from the SERPS. So get that extra click and sort out your meta description.

Missing Alt Tags

Images not only give context to your content, they also let Google understand the meaning of a page. Unfortunately, Google can't read images (at least not fully, yet).

To overcome this issue, you need to add alt-tags to your images which help Google bots crawl your website better.

Here's how you find the pages that have images without alt-tags:

First, head over to the *Images tab*. Then, filter the results by *"Missing Alt Text."*

With all the pages that have missing alt-tags, you are going to go and add the keywords you want those pages to rank for.

I have found to get the best results, keeping things natural is a winner.

Since people that are visually impaired use screen readers to help them out, a natural description helps them understand images too.

Lots of verbs, nouns, and adjectives can help both the user and Googlebot to understand the context while giving you opportunity to work in some long tail keyword variations.

Find 404 Error Pages

If you have ever used a website and reached a 404 page, you'll know that broken pages suck.

And just for the record — Google hates them as well. So it's better to fix them sooner rather than later.

To find your 404 pages, go to the *Response Codes tab*, and filter the pages by *"Client Error (4xx)"*.

There are two options you have for these pages:

But something even worse can sometimes happen.

If your product pages disappear from your shop when a product goes out of stock and Google doesn't recrawl them, they'll stay live in the index for ages.

This means that people will still find your broken pages through Google which makes for a very bad first impression.

And with ecommerce, you only get one first impression.

Find Deindexed Pages

Your store may have some pages unintentionally deindexed, which can cause an abrupt decrease in organic traffic.

I can't tell you how many times this happened when I worked in the corporate world and the development team would forget to remove the NoIndex tag when pushing the site from a dev environment to live.

Literally like — every time /facepalm

This caused huge losses of both traffic and sales for weeks and it is something you should pay attention to.

There are 2 ways I like to find out if pages are indexed or not.

The first is in the right column of Screaming Frog, scroll down and find the *Directives Category* and then click on *NoIndex—*

This will return a list of URLs that have the noindex tag applied to them and double check if those pages should have that tag or not.

The other way I like to check if pages are indexed or not, is with Google Search Console.

In the left column, click on **Crawl > Sitemaps**.

Google Search Console analyzes your sitemap and tells you how many pages it crawls and how many it indexes.

As you can see, in this example, there are 13 pages that aren't being indexed.

Click on that box, and Google will show you what could be causing the difference.

Scroll down, and click on the errors and warnings buttons.

In here, you can see what problems Google had when crawling and indexing your store.

Take the URLs affected and follow the advice shown by Google to solve each issue.

If you don't have a sitemap, then you can use Screaming Frog to create one. Once you've completed your crawl, simply use the *Generate Sitemap* feature on Screaming Frog.

Once you select this, you will be prompted on whether you want to make changes to any of the default settings. It should look like this:

Most of the settings such as Last Modified, Priority, and Change Frequency are often ignored by Googlebot. So the main thing is whether you want to include the following:

I keep it simple and leave those unticked to only include the core pages, this helps save Google's time whole maximising your crawl efficiency.

Find 302 Redirects

If you decide to stop selling a product in your store, this may show up as a 404 on your website. As stated before, you want to either redirect these pages or fix them if they're just broken.

But there are two type of redirects, and they tell Google different things:

As a rule of thumb, you will always want to use a 301 redirect because they pass the link equity of the old page to the new one.

This also tells Google that your new page is the permanent home of the old page. Whilst a 302 will tell Google that the page is coming back and keep trying to index it.

If you have ever done a 302 redirect, you want to change them immediately to a 301 one so you can get the SEO value.

To check this, go to the *Response Code* tab, and filter the results by *"Redirection (3xx)"*.

Then you can sort by status code, and find all your 302 redirects.

To those following along with the audit, you can see above there is a 307 redirect. The status next to it states it is an HSTS Redirect.

This is a cached redirect that stays in your browser and tells

it [Chrome, Safari, etc…] that all communication should happen over HTTPS.

Setting this up is outside the scope of this article, and offers very little SEO benefit over a simple 301 redirect. However, both of these are setup using the .htaccess file on your server.

If you're using a platform such as Shopify, then you will not have access to your server, as most of this is handled for you already.

Ecommerce SEO Audit with SEMRush

You can also use SEMRush to complete your ecommerce SEO audit with their dedicated auditing tool.

It's not as advanced as Screaming Frog but it is all packaged up in a simple to use and easy to navigate interface.

Instead of having to export the results and analyze them on your own, SEMrush gives you the *Overview Report* which shows you the most frequently found problems on your website-

Then you can drill down even further with a list of specific problem in the *Issues Report*.

This also explains how to fix each issue and why it is important for you to fix them-

And you can also group all of the issues by URL.

Just click on the *Crawled Pages* tab and you can see all issues by page and re-audit the URL in one click when you have fixed the problems-

How To Access The SEMRush Site Audit Tool

To run the Site Audit report, go to the left-side menu, and under the Management tab, click on *"Projects"*.

If you haven't added your site yet, click on the *"Add New Project"* button on the top right side.

Once you have added your site, click on the top left button that says *"Site Audit"*.

In there, you will see your store's audit with all its main problems shown.

Click on every problem you find and see what SEMrush recommends you do.

For example, after I clicked on *"Show Issues"* SEMrush shows me a list of problems they found which I should fix right away on one of my client's stores-

With this list of suggestions, I can work with my team to fix them right away.

I suggest you start with the errors first, and once you have fixed those issues, move to the warnings and notices.

Accelerate Your Success With Website speed

Before moving on, I want to touch on two important aspects of your store's on-site SEO. The first one is how quickly your website loads.

We've all done it before, been searching on ecommerce websites that took too long to load so we just leave. In other words if your store is too slow you won't be getting paid or receive any positive reviews any time soon.

Research has shown that 40% of people **abandon a site** that takes **longer than 3 seconds** to load.

Imagine all the valuable traffic you could be losing due to this small mistake.

In my personal experience, I have been able to **increase earnings by $30,000** in **6 hours** by increasing my website's speed.

You can expect to find similar results in your sales by improving your store's speed.

To check your ecommerce store's speed, go to GTMetrix. Add your store and run the test analysis.

As you can see in the results above there is HUGE room for improvement for this ecommerce website.

When a site is taking nearly 5 seconds to load we can assume that 40% of people are abandoning the site — what effect do you think that is having on annual revenue?

GTMetrix will also make a range of suggestions of things that you could improve on to increase site speed-

I suggest you have a developer work through these issues for a few days and please re-test regularly.

You might also want to consider upgrading your web host to someone like Kinsta if you are running WooCommerce.

Store Architecture

Another important element that affects the user experience and Google's search engine crawl is your **store architecture**.

You want to have a simple, user friendly site hierarchy, which separates your homepage from your product categories and your products listed within them.

A good rule of thumb is to make it easy for your visitors reach your product pages from your homepage within three clicks.

If you can build your store that way, navigation will be

easier for humans and the structure better for search engines to crawl.

This can be seen in Screaming Frog really easily, in two different ways.

The first is to change from *List View* to *Tree View*. Now instead of seeing a long list of URLs, you'll be viewing the overall site architecture:

Notice how Shopify neatly puts everything into /pages/, /collections/ and /products/, this makes it easy for Google to understand the site structure.

The other thing you should check is in the *List View*.

It's called *crawl depth*, and it shows the shortest route to that page, based on which page you started from.

Let me explain:

If you start from your homepage, this is ground zero — your starting point.

Every page you link to from your homepage is now assigned a crawl depth of 1, because that's how many clicks it would take.

Then Screaming Frog reviews every page that your crawl depth 1 pages links towards, and these are all assigned a value of 2. This goes on until the crawl is completed.

On the right-hand side, you'll notice a window that shows the overview, site structure, response time, and API.

If you change this from overview to site structure, you'll get a super useful graph to show you how many clicks your pages take.

Notice with Chubbies nearly everything is only 2 — 3 clicks from the homepage — this is a good site structure.

If yours has a lot more pages towards level 7 – 10, well then you've got some work to do with your site.

Keyword Research for E-commerce SEO

Even though Google has hundreds of ranking factors inside its algorithm, SEO still comes down to one major aspect of it: **keywords**.

This is the most important thing to keep in mind when it comes to on-page SEO.

Finding relevant keywords that bring qualified traffic to your store is one of the most important boxes to check when you conduct your SEO audit.

The Four Things Ecommerce Keywords Must Have

Keyword research is an art form in itself and this is especially true when it comes to ecommerce SEO.

Unlike normal keyword research there are some additional factors you need to consider.

I am going to show you the best practices of how to find and analyse keywords in a moment, but for now let's take a look at the 4 factors you need to pay attention to when generating keywords for your online store.

#1 – Search Volume

You can target a keyword with the best intent, low competition, and highest relevance, but if no one searches for it, *your store won't benefit from it*.

The first factor to consider when doing keyword research is search volume.

In some niches, an average high-traffic keyword has over 10k searches per month, whereas in other niches 1k monthly searches is a lot.

Therefore, the best way to determine the best volume for a keyword is to take other high-traffic keywords as a benchmark.

Also, you need to consider the other three factors below before selecting a keyword. It can be tempting to select a keyword with the highest search volume, but that can end up doing more damage than good.

#2 — Intent

A common mistake SEO beginners make is that they try to target the keyword with the most amount of traffic possible.

Not only do they forget that one of the other factors (i.e., competition) makes it difficult to rank for, they also forget that it doesn't matter how much traffic you have if it doesn't convert into sales.

When you optimise a page, your goal shouldn't be to acquire organic traffic; your goal should be to **attract qualified traffic**.

That means you want people to get to your website who are at the right stage of the sales funnel.

A sales funnel has four steps-

You want to draw the attention of people at the early stage of the funnel as well as the people who are at the end.

Generally speaking, the lower stages are smaller because there are fewer people in them. This isn't bad at all; **it means those fewer people have money ready to spend**.

Using Google analytics you can see if you attracted 10,000 people with a 0.5% conversion rate whose average order value

is $20, you'd bring **$1,000 in revenue**.

On the other hand, if you attracted 2,000 people that convert at 5% with an average order value of $20, your revenue would go up to $2,000.

Building more traffic does not equal more sales for your business. Only increasing qualified traffic will equal more sales.

That's the power of targeting keywords with the right intent.

Awareness Keywords

People at the awareness stage of the funnel tend to search websites for content that explains a problem. They use keywords that include-

Interest Keywords

People who already are looking for a solution to their problem, tend to use keywords that include words like-

Evaluation Keywords

Once a user starts to evaluate different products, they make searches with words related to a specific product, like:

Purchase Keywords

Finally, the people at the end of the funnel look for the best place to buy. They want a good offer, that's why they use keywords like-

If you optimize the content on your pages for these kind of keywords in each of the stages of the funnel, you will bring people with **the right intent**.

#3 — Relevance

To acquire the right audience you don't only need to attract people with the right intent, but you also need to make it relevant to your store's offerings.

This will increase the sites conversion rate.

Picking relevant keywords is simply a matter of thinking what you can offer that matches the given keyword.

Let's say you worked for Chubbies, the company shown before, and you found the keyword "sports shoes" has over 10k searches per month in the United States.

If you take into consideration what they sell, you'd know it wouldn't make sense to optimise their pages for that keyword as they don't sell sports shoes.

The same logic should apply to your own store. *Only optimise your pages for keywords that are relevant to your products*.

I have found it's super useful to look at the top 10 results for a keyword. This step takes longer, but it's worth it!

If the pages that rank in the top 10 positions are similar to yours, then you have a good chance to make the first page.

Even better, if there's lots of adverts — it's probably very profitable. That's two birds with one stone, and informs your entire strategy.

#4 — Competition

Keyword competition can be defined as the average authority a given page should have to achieve a top position for a particular keyword.

You must pick keywords for which you can realistically rank.

Let's say you wanted to position for the keyword "cheap laptops." If you take a look at Google's results, you will see this:

To rank for that keyword, you'd need to compete with companies like Amazon, Ebay, and Walmart. As you know, these big brands have a level of authority you likely can't compete against —

yet.

So it's better to attack the longer tail, lower competition search keywords first

But how do we find them? You can use either SEMRush or Ahrefs—

Ecommerce Keyword Analysis With SEMrush

SEMRush has a featured called "Keyword Difficulty," which tells you about the competitiveness of a given keyword.

To find the keyword difficulty, enter the keyword you want to rank for in SEMrush search bar like this:

Then, head over the left menu, and click on *"Keyword Difficulty"*.

Here you can see the keyword we entered has a keyword difficulty of 75%, a very high value-

If you click on the keyword difficulty percentage, you will see the top 10 pages that rank for it with their respective domain strength.

As you can see, many high-authority sites rank for this keyword. Unless you had a store with a similar domain strength, the best idea would be to ignore this keyword or use a modifier that targeted a lesser competitive term.

SEMRush makes this easy, just head back to the keyword overview page and check out some of the phrase match or related keywords they recommend-

Then just rinse and repeat the process to check how competitive they are. The lower the competition, the easier and quicker it is for you to rank!

If you want to learn more about keyword research with SEMRush then check out my much more detailed tutorial here.

Ecommerce Keyword Research with Ahrefs

Head over to the Ahrefs Keyword Explorer, enter your keyword and click "search"-

For the same keyword analyzed before, SEMrush gives a completely different picture. It shows a keyword difficulty of 1, based on the fact almost all the pages in the top 10 positions have no backlinks.

The results shown from both tools let us see neither tool is 100% correct. You should always search with both tools and see what results they give you.

While SEMrush focuses on the domain authority, Ahrefs focuses on the average amount of backlinks the top 10 results pages get.

Another great tip is to look at the URL rating for the websites that are currently ranking. This can be seen in the keyword explorer as well-

As you can see, having the highest URL rating doesn't necessarily mean you will be the top ranking website. However, when you look at thousands of keywords, you'll notice that there is a fairly good correlation.

Still not convinced?

Check out this Ahrefs blog post that looks at their own metrics. Whilst URL rating is not the same as Google PageRank, it has a pretty good correlation.

If you want to take your ecommerce keyword research to the next level with Ahrefs then I suggest you check out this tutorial.

How To Steal Your Competitors Best

Keywords

You might be wondering:

What do I do if I don't know which keywords I want to rank for?

A simple and effective way to tap a huge amount of keywords is by analyzing your competition and stealing all of their best keywords.

This is really easy to do with SEMRush and Ahrefs—

The SEMrush Way

Let's say you sold longboards and one of your competitors was Skate Deluxe. You'd first put their URL in the search field:

Then, you'd need to click on the "Organic Research" link on the right handside-
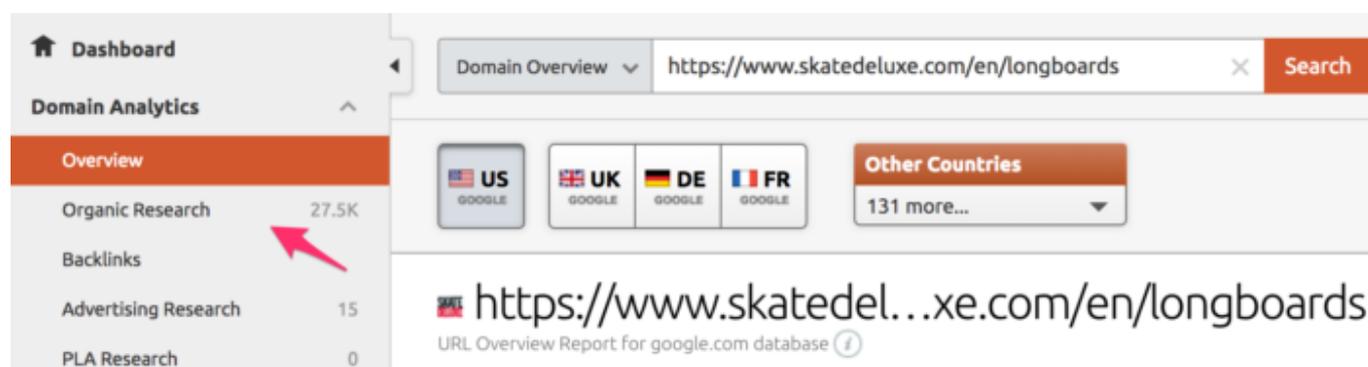
There, you would see all the keywords Skate Deluxe is ranking for:

With this list, you'd need to export it and start analyzing it to find keywords that fit the 4 factors we talked about earlier.

For example, let's say you think the keyword "*skateboard tricks*" would work on your site.

According to SEMrush this keyword has 6,600 monthly searches in the US, a keyword difficulty of 64%, and a CPC of $7.

So let's take a closer look at the 4 factors we need to consier-

Overall this keyword would be good to use at the top of the funnel to acquire traffic for lead generation.

But it's highly unlikely this keyword would deliver any significant uplift in sales revenue.

So now just rinse and repeat the process for each of your competitors best keywords. Review each of them against the factors above and decide whether or not it is something you could target.

Finding Even More Competitor Keywords With SEMRush

If you want even more keyword ideas, go back to SEMrush and click on the "*Competitors*" button:

There you will see a long list of domains that compete with your main competitor the search results.

Which means they also compete with your website!

But luckily for us we can just click on each one to find all of their best keywords as well.

So rather than just stealing your main competitors keywords, you can steal ALL of your competitors keywords.

Mwahahahaha!

With the list of domains shown by SEMRush, you repeat the same process shown above and get more ideas.

The Ahrefs Way

With Ahrefs we can repeat the same process like the one I showed you with SEMrush.

Add your competitor's website into the search field and click on the "Search" button.

In the right sidebar, click on the "Organic keywords" report.

To make the analysis easier, let's play with the filter bar a little-

Starting with the "Difficulty" filter we can easily find the low-hanging fruits.

Keywords that are relevant and have a moderate to high search volume but that have low competition. I'll define the maximum difficulty to 25-

We can keep filtering the keywords by-

and more…

For the sake of this example, I will filter the keywords a bit further based on CPC. I will add the filter to get keywords that have a minimum CPC of $2.

That means that your competitors are happy to spend $2 just to attract a single click from Google-

As you can see, you will find keywords with lower monthly searches but that are more focused on conversions.

This is good, as you want **qualified traffic** in your store.

Then just check the competition levels of each keyword as I taught you earlier.

At the end of this exercise, you should have a good list of keywords ready to use in the next section of this tutorial which focuses on on-site optimisation.

Optimising Your Stores On-Site SEO

In the last section we found and fixed all of the foundation on site SEO problems.

Now we are going to build on that foundation by optimizing

your store from the ground up for your target keywords.

I already explained some of these SEO ranking factors in another article, so here I want to show you how they apply to an e-commerce store.

Let's get started.

Your Title Tags

The title tag is one of the strongest SEO signals. Adding your target keyword in the title tag will help you increase the rankings of your pages.

The type of keywords you use will really depend on the type of page you are optimising.

You also want to consider that the title tag will be shown in search results so you need to write your title in a way that not only includes the keyword, but also entices people to click on your result.

For example on a category page you might use-

Where as on a product page you would get more specific-

Take a look at some of these SEO copywriting tricks to get a better idea of how to optimise your title for keywords and people.

Meta Descriptions

Meta descriptions are a great way to include some additional keywords and really drive home your message to attract clicks from the search results.

Whenever someone makes a search and they found results that seem equally interesting, people will likely click on the result with the most attractive description.

That's why you want to make your meta description as relevant and click-worthy as possible.

Take a look at these results for example-

The first and last result are garbage, where as the second result includes the target keyword but also attracts attention from people.

Recently Google increased the limit from 156 characters to 320, this makes it easy to get the most out of your meta description.

To get the best results, you must use a technique copywriters use all the time. This is how it works:

First, you **mention the problem** the customer has. You describe it so the customer can relate to you and your products.

Then, you **explain your solution** and, if possible, one of its features. In other words, you *talk about your product*. This works as a way to close the loop opened before.

Finally, if there's enough space left, you insert a CTA that motivates people to click. This could be a "Click here," "10% off," "Free Shipping!," and so on.

If you sold protein powder to bodybuilders, a meta description could look like this:

Looking to buff up for your next competition? The Protein Max Pro comes with 35 grams of pure isolated whey protein to accelerate your results. FREE shipping included!

When combined with a catchy title tag, you could end up with something like this-

With this structure, you can develop meta descriptions on scale. You only need to start with the problem, continue with your product and close it with a specific CTA.

Headings and Subheadings (H1, H2, etc.)

Every page should have one H1 that works as the main heading. Using headings breaks down the structure of a page and makes it easier for the users to scan and consume.

In the headings, you should always try to add both your main keywords as well as your LSI keywords — here's a great example:

Instead of just focusing on the term 'beard trimmers', this UK supermarket has included 'stubble' as a relevant term in their title.

However, this is an example of a category page, what about product pages?

A typical e-commerce product page starts with the product's name, which usually works as the H1. In most cases, you'd want to keep the H1 as your product name for relevancy and usability reasons.

If you use the same keyword across all your site, you create cannibalisation issues. This is bad, so try to stick to using the product name as the heading.

Then, the other headings (H2's and H3's) are commonly used to explain the features, return and refund policy, sizing, and shipping times.

If you have LSI keywords that include other words next to your product's name, like "comparison," or "reviews," then make sure to add them as headings too.

People often use Google Images to find products. For this reason, you must take your product image optimization seriously if you want to be found on Google Images.

To start, make the filename fit the product name. Instead of adding images with the filename IMG0010.jpg, use the product

name and main keyword.

Continue with the examples used before, a filename could be:

If you have many LSI keywords for a given product, instead of calling each filename "productname1," you could call it "productname-benefits," "productname-features," and "productname-discount," like this-

After optimizing the filename, make sure to add a relevant alt-tag.

The same principle used in the filenames applies to the alt-tags. Add LSI keywords to each alt-tag and other variations to hit as many long-tail keywords as possible.

But remember these are used for visually impaired users in screen reader software. So keep the alt tag natural sounding. Lots of useful verbs, nouns and adjectives can really help.

Finally, optimize the size of the pictures to lower its size and make your pages faster to load. If you have a Shopify store, you can install an app like Image Optimizer which automatically optimizes your images.

If you are running on WooCommerce you could use WPSmush.

Schema Data

Nowadays it has become increasingly harder to stand out on the search engines, especially in niches where you compete with SEO-wise competitors that optimize their titles and descriptions.

The solution to this problem is by using an HTML5 language called microdata. In its simplest form, microdata can help you add snippets of information to your product pages' descriptions.

Integrating Schema.org microdata for your e-commerce store can

help you include data to your description like-

As you can see above, a huge company like Samsung isn't taking advantage of rich snippets and this is true for many ecommerce stores.

Integrating microdata and rich snippets can not only help you stand out against the big boys but also help you draw more qualified traffic and increase your CTR even further.

In 2011, Google partnered with its main competitors (Yahoo and Bing) to create Schema.org, an initiative to "create and support a common set of schemas for structured data markup on web pages."

In other words, if you want to use microdata in your store, use Schema.org. This list shows you the different kind of information you can use in your e-commerce store.

To integrate Schema into your store, there are two main ways you can follow:

Not sure if this applies to you?

Google created this awesome tool that will allow you to put your website in and find the structured data for that page. It's called the Structured Data Testing Tool.

Let's return to Chubbies shorts and see how they're looking for their product pages:

On the left-hand side we can see their source code, but on the right Google has translated this into all the structured data they found.

This includes their product name, url, price, sku, mpn, and gtin details. This is super useful information for Google to understand your website, and will help with Adwords too.

Internal Linking For Ecommerce

As I explained in a recent article, internal linking is one of the most powerful and most commonly overlooked SEO tactics.

Internal linking allows you to establish your own anchor text, which can help you with ranking for your top keywords.

Even though there's not a lot of space in your product's descriptions for a link, you can still develop a strong internal linking strategy by using a simple tactic: product recommendations.

Let's take a look at what the kings of e-commerce do with their own product recommendations:

After looking at a backpack, Amazon recommends me another product as a bundle, which not only works great to increase the average order value, it also adds a powerful internal link to this product.

If you keep scrolling down, you will see the famous *"Customers who bought this item also bought"* section, which shows dozens of product recommendations.

But wait, there's more! If you scroll down to the bottom of the page, you will see two further product recommendation sections:

The first, called *"Customers who viewed this item also viewed"*, shares a few dozen more products related to the one I saw.

Finally, they recommend me to check out previously seen products.

If you want to repeat what Amazon does, you can with the help of a few tools.

Shopify has a few apps that allow you to add product

recommendations, some of which are:

And if you are on WooCommerce you can checkout this plugin or this plugin.

How to Add Content that Converts to Your Product Pages

Product pages are the most important part of any e-commerce store; they are the equivalent of a retail store's sales clerk.

After you have spent all the time and money to bring qualified traffic to your store, you need to make sure your product pages provide the right tools to motivate your visitors to become a customer of your company.

Keep reading to find out how you do it.

Note: A big problem many ecommerce stores make is they copy and paste category and product copy in multiple pages.

I don't recommend this at all, as it causes duplicate content.

Always create original content in every category and product page; it's one of the best investments you will make.

Show Your Value Proposition

Most visitors that arrive on a product page, they see the product, and they likely think to themselves "*why should I buy this product from this company?*"

The answer to this question is your **value proposition**.

The value proposition is what makes your company stand out from the rest; it's what makes a visitor want to buy from you.

With the challenge Amazon represents to any e-commerce store,

your store needs to make its value proposition shine.

To develop your value proposition, think about your company and your brand. *What does your company offer that no one else does? What do you do better than anyone else?*

You need to put that value proposition right in your product description. Make it clear what benefit your visitors will get from your products.

Let's see some examples:

Amazon provides convenience thanks to their Prime program and the wide selection of products.

Chubbies is a company famous for their men's shorts. Their value proposition, however, doesn't focus on the products they sell, but on the lifestyle they offer to their customers.

Take a look at their product copy:

The copy they use is in line with their brand and their value proposition: **fun** and **relaxation**.

While Toms (the shoe company) value proposition is the way they give back to those in need. You buy their products because you want to help other people, and they show it on their product pages.

You should think about your value proposition and how to integrate it smartly within your product pages.

Use As Many High Quality Pictures As Possible

One of the main challenges customers face online is the inability to touch, try, and feel the products they shop. Many people have made a purchase online and when they received it they were not happy with the quality of the design. This then leads people to start being more cautious.

For this reason, e-commerce stores must show the highest-quality pictures they can.

Some e-commerce store owners that sell wholesale products may just show the retailer's photos, which in many cases aren't high-quality. The lack of high-quality product photography represents a costlyat w mistake.

All successful e-commerce companies feature high-quality product photography in their stores.

Mr. Porter, the luxury clothing retailer, lets you zoom in and see the details of their products.

ASOS.com, the famous British online clothing retailer, shows you how their products look in real life with the help of a model and great lighting.

WatchShop lets you see a 360-degree view of their watches, which proves to be useful on a luxurious product like a watch.

To take high-quality product photos, hire a professional photographer. Unless you have a big product turnover (which means you'll be changing your product's images every few months), you need to think of photography as one of the most important investments you can make.

If you can't afford a photographer then invest in a portable lightbox and a DSLR so you can capture your own high quality images on demand.

Take a look at the setup I use-

Heck you could even take things to another level and also invest in a small turntable to create simple product videos to display alongside your images.

Write Amazing Product Descriptions

Along with great product photography, having great product

descriptions allow customers to understand what a product is and what it does.

Despite its importance, most e-commerce stores commit three serious mistakes when they write their product descriptions:

Start with showing the benefits of your products, not the features. Think how the *customer will benefit* from using your products and how it will help them *solve their problems*.

If you have a list of features, take each one and think about the benefit it brings to your customers.

On the other hand, if you sell technical products, leave the features for the most technical-savvy people who understand and want to read the technical details.

DeLonghi, the famous Italian house appliances company, shows five tabs-

Sephora focuses both on their features (the *"what you get"*) and the benefits women get from using their products (the *"why should you care"*) while also providing tutorials on how to use the product.

Writing a compelling product description will not only help lead your customer into the sale, but will also send all of the right signals to Google when it comes to ranking your product pages in the search engines.

If you take a shortcut here and copy/paste the manufacturer provided description — you will never see any significant rankings in Google period.

So as well as being cautious about a product because of a poor quality image, if you don't include all the information they need, people will also be hesitant to buy.

Use Testimonials (or customer reviews)

Showing your visitors what previous customers have said about your products is one of the most effective ways to lower their fears and doubts about shopping with your company.

Testimonials work because people want to see what other people think. Psychologists call this "social proof," and it's an easy way for you to increase your conversion rate and trust.

According to Reevoo, **50 or more reviews** per product can help you get a **4.6% increase** in **conversion rates**.

Best Buy shows a long list of customer reviews for all their products, including their TVs as shown below:

And not only that but they give other customers the chance to reply to those reviews to ask any follow up questions they might have about the product.

In fact, Amazon even go a step further by sending emails out to people that have previously bought a product when someone has a question-

This is a great social strategy from Amazon that keeps a fresh supply of user generated content coming in while previous customers help potential customers convert into sales.

If you use Shopify, adding testimonials to your store is easy with the help of the following plugins:

And for the WooCommerce users out there you could integrate testimonials and reviews with this plugin or this plugin.

Link Building for Ecommerce

Link building for e-commerce works like any other type of link building.

The more high-quality links you get pointing to your store

with a favorable anchor text, the more it will help you increase your store's positioning in the search engines.

What makes link building for e-commerce different than, say, link building for a local store or a media site, is that an e-commerce business needs links pointing to every section of its store, including the category and product pages.

My team has used this approach with great success to **achieve incredible results like**—

I will share more details of those 3x ecommerce SEO case studies a little bit later, along with the specific approach we used for each site.

But for now I want to show you a couple of ways that you can build links to your ecommerce store.

Start With Competitor Analysis

Competitor analysis is one of the most powerful ways to find what's working with your competitors and replicate it.

Start by gathering the first 10 organic results for the main keyword you want to rank for. Make a list with each URL you find on an Excel sheet.

Then use Ahrefs to find all the backlinks that are pointing to each of your competitors.

For example the top 3 results for *Swim Trunks* are-

We would just lookup all of the backlinks pointing to each of these URLS in Ahrefs—

As you can see above, we could easily acquire links from Wopular.com, Yaelp.com and Usseek.com — and that is from only looking at 1 of the top 10 results.

And by using the Ahrefs Keyword Explorer we can see that we

need links from just 10 websites to break the top 10 for this keyword-

We already found 3 targets earlier so now just export all the results from each competitor and work through them.

To keep your analysis organized, create separate tabs in one master Excel sheet.

And instead of analysing every link from each competitor manually, sort them by Domain Rating and attack the more valuable links first.

As a rule of thumb, sites with a Domain Rating over 60 and pages with Page Rating over 40 are considered as high-quality. This will help you prioritize your efforts.

Then just take each link, open them in your browse and try to see how your competitor got these links so you can replicate it.

Stealing your competitors best backlinks is my all time favorite link building strategy.

Do Guest Posting (Yeah Yeah, I Know)

Guest posting is one of my favorite ecommerce link building techniques. It can help you build authentic relationships with industry bloggers while growing your site's exposure. An easy bit of content marketing.

Doing guest posting allows you to get high-quality links that can help you increase your rankings for branded keywords.

The guest posting process can be summed up in five steps:

Create an Excel sheet with each site you find so you can qualify them later.

Then, analyze each site based on a set of qualifiers. Here the

set of attributes I use to qualify my prospects:

Once you have the definitive list of sites, you need to start outreaching. Take each site on your list and look for the contact information (i.e. name and email address) of the person with whom you'd like to connect.

Or if you want to make things 100x quicker, you can use a tool like Ninja Outreach that will not only find great places to guest post — but also pull back all of the metrics you need to make informed decisions.

It will also automatically find all of the contact information you need and makes the entire process from finding prospects to contacting them a 3 click process.

After you connect with someone in each site, create an article outline. Don't forget to add a few links pointing to your site. If you don't know if the webmaster will accept them, ask them!

With the article finished, send it and wait for a response. You are likely to get a few rounds of edits, so make the necessary changes until the article is approved.

Once the article goes live, don't forget to promote it on your social media as well as participate in the comment section.

When you first get started with your link building efforts, you may need to guest post a couple dozen times until you have built a foundation.

Other Ecommerce SEO Link Building Tactics

Honestly I could write about link building tactics all day long.

Ecommerce Link Building Services

We all know link building is a great way to get organic traffic to your site and help you rank. There's no escaping it in this market, you must build links.

However, people have made careers out of it so obviously the quickest and easiest way to do link building for your Ecommerce store is to get someone else to do it for you.

Let someone else deal with the hard work while you take it easy. Add it to the top of someone else's job list, giving you more time to drive your brand, look at other ways of advertising, get involved in your social media community or simply just be able to finish reading that email.

The problem is **it's difficult to find reliable link building services** especially that are suited for ecommerce stores.

So I wanted to go over a few link building services you could use (if you prefer a fully managed service, click here)

Blogger Outreach / Guest Postings

If you want to outsource all of the hard work of guest posting then this is the solution for you.

But **BUYER BEWARE!**

Always double check your orders when you receive them and make sure you review-

With that said, here are some of the better guest posting services you can take advantage of to build quality links with next to no effort-

Infographic Creation & Distribution

You can be very creative when it comes to creating infographics for ecommerce.

There are a ton of angles you can attack that directly tie into your main goal of selling more products.

For example you can create things like buyers guides or how to use a specific product category.

This kind of content always attracts links and will continue to reap benefits as more and more people share it.

The problem is creating great infographics that stand out from the crowd and then getting them placed in the right places isn't so easy.

But there are a couple of services that can help you out-

Local SEO for E-commerce

So far in this article, I've referred to national or international online retailers.

Many of you have local businesses that you want to take online. You will only be selling to customers in your city or region.

With that in mind we need to approach SEO in a slightly different way.

According to Google, **50% of their searches** are done with a mobile device, and a **third of them** have local intent. What's even more important is that 80% of local mobile searches convert. A large chunk of the digital world use a mobile so you'll need to check when optimizing your site that you keep this in mind.

In order to capture the local traffic, your store has to have three attributes:

The trifecta of your name, address, and phone number is known as NAP. **Remember this acronym** as you will hear about it a lot later on. As with any kind of local commerce store, they need
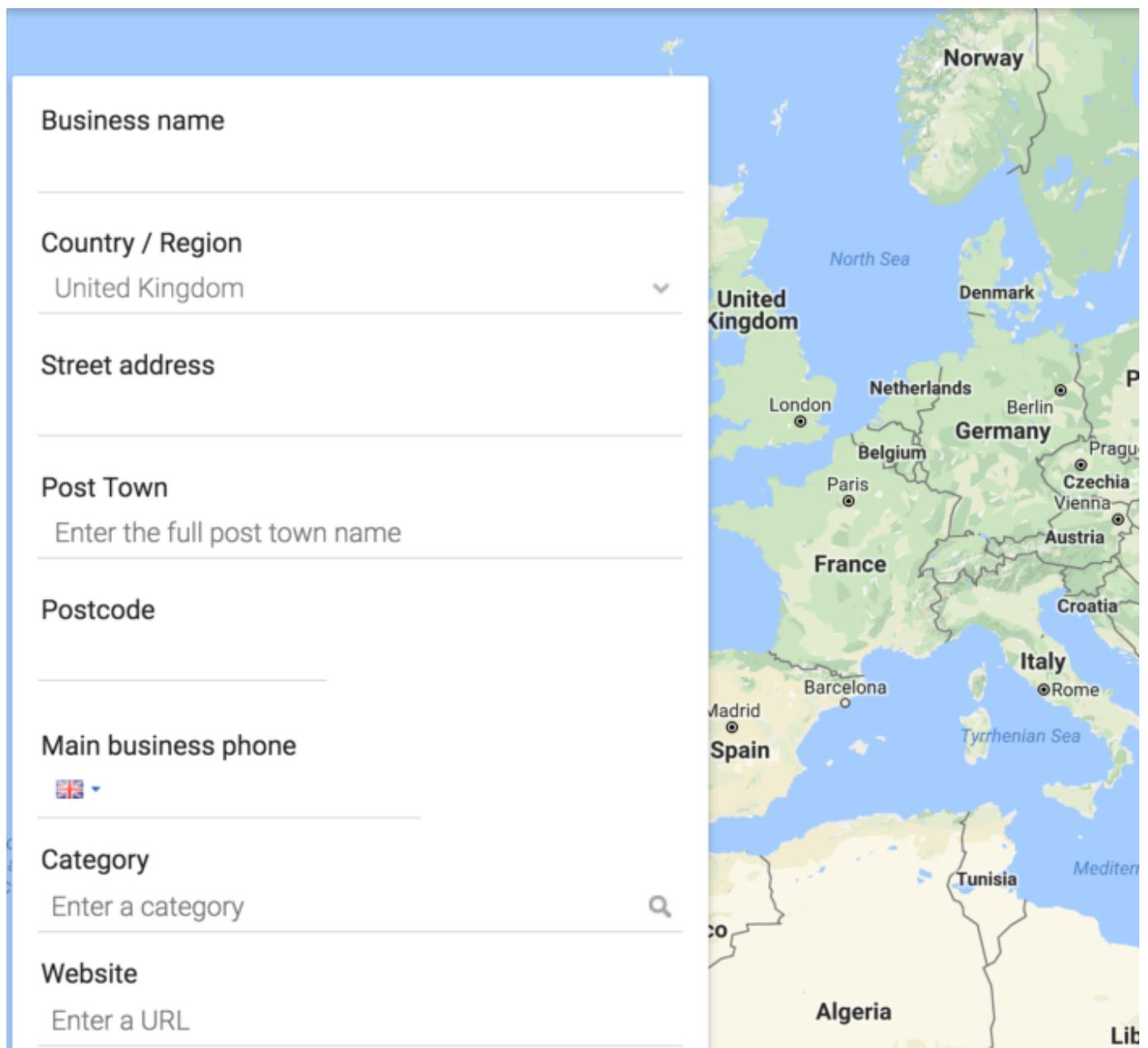
to know where you are!

With this said, let me share some basic local SEO tips for your store.

Claim Your Profile

Your first step is to create and **claim the local profile** with Google, known as Google My Business.

Once you are on the website, click on "Start Now."

Log in to your account. After you do that, you'll be redirected to a map-

Enter all your business details. Remember to add your business name as it should show in the Google results.

Also, double check to make sure you don't make any mistakes with the address or the phone number.

Once you have finished the process, Google will publish your store in their results which makes for a quick win.

Quick tip… a lot of people like to buy from local based business' so if they are your target customers then show them where you are and use marketing to show them why you are the best.

Link Building for Local E-commerce SEO

The main difference between non-local and local SEO is related to the link building. In local SEO, link building is called "**citation building**."

A citation refers to any website where it shows your business name, address, and phone number on the same page and in the same format as your local listing.

A citation looks something like this:

Your Company Ltd.
150 Piccadilly
St. James's
London
W1J 9BR

020 7493 8181

Unlike link building, building citations is a relatively simple process: you go to local business directories and you add your website in there.

Instead of having to manually find every local business directory, you can use a tool like Whitespark. Their software

helps you find specific citation building opportunities for your store.

You can also hire a company to build citations for your store. I personally recommend Loganix, as they provide a great service at a low price. You can also take advantage of a special discount which gives you a 15% discount on your next manual local SEO citation building services.

Two other companies that offer a great service at a low price are The Hoth and SERPLogic.

On-Site Optimisation for Local SEO

Make sure to add your name, address, and phone numbers on every page of your store, in the same format as your Google local listing. This also makes it easy for anyone to contact you. There's nothing more frustrating then having to search for contact details.

Also, use the name of your City and State in the different SEO elements, like the title tags, meta description, and content on your website.

Finally, Take advantage of what Schema has to offer; their local business and postal address markup can help search engines identify and display your location.

Get Reviews

Another important element to consider for any e-commerce store is the **online reviews**.

You must make sure to get the reviews on your listing because Google considers this factor important when ranking a website.

Reviews are displayed in the right corner of a local search query, under the map.

The quality and quantity of reviews are strong factors in

Google and you should pay attention to them,

A good way to get more reviews for your store is to ask both new and existing clients to leave a written review on your Google listing. You can set up an automated email to do so as well.

Your Google listing isn't the only place where you should ask people to leave a review. You should encourage your customers to leave a review on sites like Yelp or Scoot but you should focus on Google above all else.

Reviews are not only useful for your rankings. Like social media, Google and other review platforms help you understand what your consumers like and don't like.

A review is free feedback, which you can use to improve your product, answer queries and offer solutions. If you appear visible and focus on helping users you will become more and more popular, people will pay more attention to your ads and subscribe to your email list.

So make sure you learn what your customers are saying, whether it be on Instagram, Facebook, Linkedin or your Google listing.

Remember you aren't the only person to read your reviews.

Note, whether local ecommerce or not also make sure you have a privacy policy available on your site, in most countries this is a legal requirement.

E-commerce SEO Case Studies

Let's face it, we all getting a peak behind the closed doors of other ecommerce sites right?

Whether it be a sneak peak of their data or a look at the ways they create their blog posts, seeing the practices and process of people in the same industry can be a very valuable

experience.

So I wanted to share 3x long term ecommerce SEO case studies from my fully managed ecommerce SEO clients.

You'll get a look at-

So without further ado-

Case Study #1: Furniture E-commerce Store

One of my clients was a well-established furniture store with a relatively limited but natural link profile.

Their main challenge was they were competing for their main keywords with e-commerce giants such as Ikea, Tesco, and Marks and Spencers, among others.

Due to the high competition, their company couldn't rank their pages on the first two pages of Google for their main keywords. To make matters worse, they were struggling to rank for long tail keywords as well.

With the help of my agency, we conducted a full audit and kicked off a 3 pronged link building campaign-

All of that had a dramatic effect-

Organic search traffic from Google has exploded on the site since 2015.

Not only that but the site has now generated a total of £18,811,325 or **just over 26 million dollars** in ecommerce revenue-

Not bad for a site that sells furniture online right?

You can read the original case study that we published back in 2016 here.

As you can see 2 years on the site has continued to grow and

is now delivering just shy of £1,000,000 / 1.3 million dollars of sales per month.

Case Study #2: T-Shirt E-commerce Store

Our t-shirt e-commerce client was already established in the e-commerce industry but was losing organic traffic and rankings for over a year before we got started.

Their main problem was the site had a low-quality link profile due to bad work done years before the main algorithm changes.

After conducting a full audit we found the site also needed a huge amount of on-site optimisation.

So we-

Then in the first 6 months, we built a over 100 quality links from high-authority sites related to the fashion/t-shirt industry.

We created a link profile with branded anchors to help dilute the over optimised historical link profile.

The rewards were glorious-

Organic search traffic nearly doubled to the site within 6 months!

You can see the effect this had on sales **boosting monthly revenue to the $50,000 USD** range (shown as AUD below)-

They have sold nearly $1,270,319.75 AUD of Tshirts so far.

Which works out to be just shy of $1,000,000 USD in total!

Crazy right?

Learn more about the campaign and what we did with the full case study that was published in early 2015.

Case Study #3: Clothing E-commerce Store

One of our clients uses Shopify, but were not doing their housekeeping.

We found that they had created around 300 collection pages with thousands of pages in duplicate content.

My resident Shopify expert went in and cleaned out the old collections and removed them from Google's index to improve Googlebots efficiency.

This is what happened:

Their rankings increased steadily month by month as Google recrawled the website. A simple on site audit allowed them to jump into the top positions for a whole bunch of keywords.

The financial results?

Their revenue jumped to over $160,000 per month *(£116,000 GBP)—*

Since launch the *site has now generated over 2 million dollars* in sales *(£1,444,342 GBP)*

And given that March was their best month of revenue ever — I suspect that is going to continue to grow for a long time to come.

Wrapping It Up

When you approach ecommerce SEO in the right way — it will impact and change your business forever.

Make sure that you start out with a full site audit before doing anything else. It's important that you build a solid SEO foundation first.

My team and I have worked with a lot of people over the years

and each search engine optimization strategy in this post has had great success.

Don't forget, Google are always issuing updates, so your company might be ranking highly now but to ensure you keep your place in the search engines you need to keep up to date with any new changes.