



How You Can Improve SEO for Your E-Commerce Site

E-commerce activity is at an all-time high. What does this mean for your online store and how important is SEO to the success of your operations? SEO Leverage's Gert Mellak shares what he knows.

How rewarding is ranking?

Gert researched a single keyword, "paddleboard", and came up with the data that it gets 45,000 searches in the US per month. The top ranking site gets about 8,000 visitors of those searches. If one were to assume just a two percent conversion rate at about \$400 per conversion, that would mean more than \$60,000 in revenue for a single month.

The searches you can optimize for

The danger with e-commerce, Gert says, is that we can go too broad with our content or keywords. If you're selling bikes, for instance, it doesn't mean people researching all kinds of biking topics will be interested in your wares. What you want to cater to are specific searches concerning area, pricing, comparison reviews, brand reviews and the like. These are called informational, transactional, commercial and navigational searches.

- 1. Navigational** - This could be as simple as typing in a store's name and website. There may or may not be purchase intent.
- 2. Informational** - This is data gathering about use, advantages, etc. - Is an e-bike better than a normal bike? What are the differences, the pros and cons?
- 3. Commercial** - This gets a bit more specific. There can be brand or product comparison, checking out of different models, etc. Commercial intent is there, although buying cycles may still be lengthy.
- 4. Transactional** - This is where people are getting very specific, looking for best pricing, often area codes, etc.

The role of location

Fifty to 70 percent of e-commerce searches have a local intent. Google has a good idea of which niches typically look for area-specific providers, and seeks to deliver.

You can tailor your online store to a specific locale by, for example, getting the .com.au of a domain. Or you can target area-appropriate creatives, building up content for instance about bike riding in Brisbane to get more traction there.

Knowing what Google wants to rank

Just like with regular SEO, Google ranks what they believe will best satisfy users. So if you want to rank for a certain bike brand and its related queries, check out what



Google is already ranking and try to provide something similar.

The challenge of scale

The trouble with many e-commerce sites is their size. There may be more than 15,000 products in a single store, each with its own page. Each product filter or category will have its own page as well. This poses the dilemma to Google of which pages to crawl and index, demanding time and money of the search engine.

E-commerce SEO is a lot about streamlining Google's efforts. So in optimizing you have to be specific about what you actually want Google to crawl. What, for instance, are your top products? Which make you the most profit? Are there pages you can de-index?

Uniqueness counts

A common pitfall you'll see on e-commerce sites is using and re-using the same product description, often from the manufacturer's site, no matter how many times it's been copied across different sites.

If you're selling the same product as different stores, you must make your content unique. If you've got thousands of offerings and the thought of that many original texts overwhelms you, it comes back to conversions. Which products are making the most money and which pages do you really want people to access? Start by hiring someone to research and make copy for your top 200 sellers.

This is the drawback of done-for-you e-commerce systems that generate a store in half an hour. You've got your products, you've got your drop-shipper, all of that is fine. But the 5,000 copy-pasted product descriptions will do nothing for your ranking.

Add value with video

One of the ways you can add user value to your content is to make your products more tangible using videos. User videos, unboxing videos, tutorials from YouTube can be embedded on your site, giving the visitor everything they need to make a purchase decision, as well as making your page more rank-worthy.

Being consistent

As with anything in SEO, content for e-commerce is not a make-it-now-and-forget-about-it affair. Google is updating all the time. Outdated descriptions won't do you any favors. Work on up-to-date, grammatically correct text. Work on logical, user-friendly categories and collections.

Get real, get trusted

Yes, Amazon uses manufacturer text. You are not Amazon. So focus on quality content, and focus on building your authority. You want relevant sites linking to you, respected sources recommending you for your market niche. Work on your EAT: Expertise, Authoritativeness and Trustworthiness.



Gert recommends getting listed in Google My Business. Google will authenticate your business by physically sending you a code to put on your site. They'll know you're a real business with a real address.

When your markets speak different languages

In areas where there are different but similar languages and you have separate pages for each, there could be an issue with Google mistaking content of yours for duplicates. Proper tags and coding or markup are needed to prevent this.

Other buckets to fill

Factors that will also affect your ranking in Google are:

Site speed - If your competitors are faster than you, you're not likely to rank.

Navigation - Make it easy for users to find what they're looking for. As a rule of thumb, good e-commerce sites have products just three clicks away from where the visitor lands.

Structure code - Give Google important details in language they can understand - product, price, availability, location, shipping time, brand.

Site architecture - Don't waste Google's crawl budget on pages that aren't that relevant. Consider de-indexing low-value products, to highlight what does bring in the revenue.

Take advantage of image search

More and more people are using Google image search to locate products, but also searching with images. Google actually lets you take a picture, use the image for search and find a store that sells the same product.

Many e-commerce sites are missing an easy win, which is using the alternative text on images to let them come up in search.

Need help optimizing your e-commerce site? Contact Gert and his team at SEOLeverage.com

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