Ways to Grow Online Sales Through Web Traffic
Tips and tools for SEO and conversion rate optimization

What’s inside:

- **AN OVERVIEW OF SEO IN 2020**
  The basics of SEO, and the most impactful changes likely to effect your SEO strategy in 2020.

- **THE GUIDE TO ACQUIRING MORE SHOPPERS**
  The on-page and off-page SEO tips and tools that’ll help you drive more organic traffic.

- **THE GUIDE TO CONVERTING MORE SHOPPERS**
  The top checkout levers you can pull to mitigate abandonment and maximize conversions.

Ecommerce shopping grows each year, with more customers shopping on their mobile devices than ever before. Ideally, you want to capture as much of this online traffic to your ecommerce site as you can, in turn driving conversions. While paid search and social media marketing have their place, search engine optimization is a vital strategy for growing your organic ecommerce site traffic.

Whether you are looking to gain your first or 1000th customer, growing organic traffic to your ecommerce website is challenging; it’s also essential to your success as an online retailer. Luckily, there is a tool designed to grow your online traffic organically, allowing you to create evergreen value that pays greater dividends over time - search engine optimization (SEO).

Developed from a webinar by ourselves and our friends at Logical Position, this actionable guide to growing and converting organic traffic is a valuable resource to help you understand SEO, the importance of using SEO to grow your business, and methods you can use yourself to increase organic traffic.
CHAPTER 1

TYPES OF ECOMMERCE SITE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

What does this chapter cover?

Before diving into specifics, we’ll cover some foundational SEO basics, including what it is and the two main types of SEO. With this knowledge, you will be better able to discuss and plan your content strategies. This first chapter will cover the following:

- What is ecommerce site search engine optimization and why is it important?
- On-site SEO for your ecommerce site
- Off-site SEO for your ecommerce site

Let’s start with what search engine optimization (SEO) is and why it’s vital for your ecommerce business to succeed.

What is ecommerce site SEO and why is it important?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of maximizing the quantity and quality of traffic to a specific website by optimizing the site to appear at the top of search engine results pages (SERPs). This is achieved by formatting and designing your website to be appealing to both your users and search engines.

SEO is important for online businesses, as it helps you gain visibility, recognition, and increase your site traffic. Despite offering high-quality products, many businesses don’t get the traction they merit because customers never find them when searching online. Prioritizing SEO will ensure that your pages rank high in search engine results pages, leading to increased visitor traffic and more leads.

Search engine optimization is an organic method of growth, as opposed to paid search. Modern customers find what they are looking for using search engines. While paid advertising can be effective, organic SEO helps you gain more exposure, build more credibility, and gain more clicks. More than that, paid traffic gains immediate visibility, but organic traffic has more longevity and long-term value.
What are the two types of SEO?

**Off-Site SEO**

Off-site SEO, or off-page SEO, involves strategies outside of your actual site pages, that boost your rank in search engine results pages (SERP). Optimizing your off-site SEO means developing trust, relevance, exposure, and domain authority. Backlinking, blogs, and infographics are examples of off-site SEO strategies.

Off-site SEO is important to address because the popularity, trustworthiness, and domain authority of your site plays a major role in its ability to rank high in SERPs.

**On-Site SEO**

On-site SEO, or on-page SEO, involves optimizing components of your website pages, content, and structure with the aim of ranking high in SERP and driving more traffic to your site from search. On-page SEO factors include content, HTML source code, meta descriptions, and more.

On-site SEO is important to perfect, as it impacts how search engines perceive your site and how well you rank. On-page SEO has a significant impact on how search engines interpret, catalog, and rank your site. Ultimately, good SEO practices aim to make it easy for the user and search engines to determine what a web page is about, whether the web page is relevant to their search query, and answer the user’s search intent.
Description of Off-Site SEO Tactics

Backlinks

Backlinking is an essential component of off-site SEO. Websites often link to other websites on their own site and in posts. Search engines use the number and value of these links to determine page quality. Theoretically, the higher the number of high-quality links pointing to a website, the more authority it has and the higher it will rank. This is because links are seen as an indication that the website is of high-quality and addresses the search intent of the user.

There are a few different types of backlinks:
- **Natural links**: Links to your website without any request given. Others naturally link to your website based on the value their users will find.
- **Manually built links**: Links to your website from link-building initiatives. In this scenario, you request and develop links by getting customers to link to your website and share your content, or through partnerships with companies in your industry. You can be featured on their site and do the same for them.
- **Self-created links**: Links to your website that you develop yourself. These are often in online directories, forums, blog comments, press releases, and similar content formats. In some cases, these tactics can lean towards black hat SEO, which is frowned on (and punished) by search engines. We suggest never using black hat SEO tactics.

No matter your link-building strategy, the links themselves bring different value in relation to SEO. **Link equity**, often called link juice, refers to the fact that links transfer authority across pages. To optimize your backlink strategy, you want to gain high-value links that pass the greatest link equity.

**Link equity determining factors:**
- Content and domain relevance
- Linking site authority
- Follow or no-follow link
- Crawlable link
- Link anchor text
- New and current
- The number of links
- HTTP status of the linking page

“Since there are so many contributing factors to how backlinks impact your domain authority, you should develop a comprehensive link-building strategy for your ecommerce site. Remember that quality > quantity when it comes to back links.”
Description of Off-Site SEO Tactics Cont.

**Guest Blog Posts**

Having other websites feature guest blog posts on their website gives you exposure to a new, relevant audience and provides link juice to your website. If you develop SEO optimized content for the guest post, this is a win-win.

Typically, guest posts can be acquired through partnerships with other businesses operating businesses in your - or a closely related - niche market. Offer to feature a guest blog post in exchange for the same on their site. In general, your aim should be to reach out to high-value, popular, authoritative websites in your industry.

**Social Media Marketing**

It’s best to think of your social media marketing as an extension of your on-page SEO efforts. Social media leverages customer loyalty and engagement to drive traffic to your site and motivate conversions. Social media content should be SEO optimized as well, but it doesn’t impact the SEO score or authority of your webpages.

You should still always optimize your social media posts for SEO, helping them gain traffic and climb the rankings.

![Image of Social Links to a Website](image.png)

**Infographics and Downloadable Assets**

Infographics, downloadable assets, and similar content fall into a gray area between on and off-site SEO. The infographics or downloadable assets themselves are not on-page, and are not crawled by search engines. This means these resources aren’t indexed properly, carrying with them the same SEO value.

However, these contents are almost always linked to through landing pages on your ecommerce site. These landing pages will be SEO optimized to draw traffic interested in the multimedia content you are offering customers.
Description of On-Site SEO Tactics

Page Titles & Headings

The main page title and headers are vital to on-site SEO. Your headers (H2s, H3s, and so on), organize your content for both your users and search engines. When crawling, search engines make note of your site’s structural layout, cataloging how you organize your content. From this, they can determine how related and relevant your page is to the user’s search query and whether or not it will answer the user’s search intent directly and completely.

It’s best to design your main page and headers to organize content for your users first. In turn, these structures will help you rank for your niche market.

URL Structure

Have you ever seen a URL structure that ends in random numbers (something like this: https://www.example.com/blog/hrdh7rnd8R3jhGH83)? Some users won’t pay attention to the URL they go to, but many savvy users will. More importantly, the search engine always factors the URL structure and keywords when crawling.

Always label pages accurately, creating a clear URL structure and using focused, relevant keywords based on the content. Never duplicate a URL title, making sure to label every page uniquely.

On-Page Links

On-page links mostly refer to links that are within the main content of each webpage. These in-content links are commonly found in the copy text and use anchor text to refer the user and hint at what information the link will offer the reader. On-page links also include links found in images, infographics, and other multimedia content that is displayed to the user on the webpage.

Search engines factor in how many links you have, whether they are internal or external links, and the relevance and authority of the site you are linking to. So choose your links carefully.
Page Load Speeds

While many people think of on-page SEO as content focused, the performance of the web page is inherently tied to its reception. When search engines crawl your site, they will test your page load times. If pages don’t meet basic performance standards, they will take a hit on their ranking score.

Customers want fast, responsive web sites, or they will leave, affecting your bounce rate. As technology advances, web sites become outdated. If you don’t update your site to meet performance needs, you will start to see your domain authority - and SERP rankings - drop.

Meta data: Tags, Titles, and Descriptions

It’s important to know that on-page SEO does not only refer to content displayed to customers. Meta tags are core components of on-page SEO, despite customers never seeing them. Page titles and meta descriptions don’t actually appear on your page, but are part of the page structure and impact your rankings.

Search engines crawling your page use meta tags to organize and interpret your page content. These types of meta data are vital for helping search engines understand your page and correctly direct customers to your content based on queries.

Content

Page content, including copy text, images, and infographics are all crucial to on-page SEO. Content should be written with an SEO focus, ensuring that it appeals to users and search engines alike. Use keywords, ensuring that you spread them out and target the topic directly. Name images with SEO in mind and optimize image alt text for SEO as well.

While this is the most obvious on-page SEO element, it requires great attention and care to perfect it. Keyword stuffing will no longer work, as search engines get better at answering user queries.
SUMMARY OF LEARNINGS

SEO BASICS

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
Is the process of maximizing the quantity and quality of traffic to a specific website by optimizing the site to appear at the top of search engine results pages (SERPs). SEO helps online retailers gain visibility and recognition, and increase their site traffic.

The Two Types of SEO:
On-Site SEO - Taking actions outside of your website to impact your organic page rankings.
Off-site SEO - Taking actions within your website to impact your organic page rankings.

SEO - A Long Term Traffic Strategy
When you’re just starting out on your SEO journey, it can be easy to fall into the quantity over quality mindset -- meaning that you publish as many pages and blogs as possible and you acquire backlinks from any sites. We caution you against this strategy as Google punishes sites that contain duplicate content, irrelevant content, and those that have irrelevant backlinks. Instead focus on building high-quality optimized content that is relevant to your audience. This will eventually lead to higher SERPs rankings and organic backlinks from relevant sites.
While paid search can help you grow your traffic in the short term, organic traffic has a longer, more evergreen impact on your business. While organic traffic is harder to develop at first, it is more valuable than paid search, because it helps you build your domain authority, brand reputation, and grow your customer-base at the same time.

Rather than simply list tips, we’ve broken the process into two broad steps. Then we dive into how these tactics will bring you added value. We’ll cover the following:

- The areas for improvement
- The opportunities for wins
- Perks beyond SEO

Below are tips and strategies that you can use to grow your organic ecommerce site traffic. First, we’ll look at identifying areas to improve and then opportunities for success, so that you can approach organic traffic growth in the right order and with the right mentality.
**Find The Areas For Improvement**

**FOREWORD**

Understanding where to make the most meaningful improvements starts with relying on your analytics. Use your analytics tool to help you identify trends and patterns in your data, isolating the areas that can be improved.

Below are some of the best indicators of your performance, and can help you find what components of your ecommerce site are suffering the most.

**Organic and Paid Search**

Analytics data on organic and paid search traffic give you an idea of how much traffic your ecommerce site is receiving, as well as the cost per click and customer acquisition costs. It serves as a baseline for how your ecommerce site is performing and the traction it’s getting. By viewing trends over time, you can see where your traffic spikes, dips, and plateaus, turning this data into actionable insights.

Use this to isolate changes you’ve made, verifying what causes the loss in traffic. Directly combat the things that negatively impact your ecommerce site traffic growth, helping you get back on track.

**Backlinks**

The backlinks for your ecommerce site do not have a significant impact on how you select opportunities, but can help you identify weaknesses or strengths. As backlinks help develop domain authority, the number of backlinks compared to your organic and paid traffic will give you an idea of how much value these backlinks are bringing you. If you have a large number of backlinks and are not seeing decent traffic growth, this is an area for you to focus on improving. If this is the case, review your link-building strategy and update your plan based on current best practices.

**Traffic Trends**

Many SEO tools offer traffic trend data, that show organic and paid traffic on the same graph. This is great for identifying trends in the data, comparing how the two are performing, and measuring traffic against algorithm updates for the search engines. These will help you isolate drops and spikes, as well as see how the trend changes over time.
Find The Opportunities For Wins

FOREWARD

Once you’ve found the areas that are negatively impacting your website the most, you can then look at finding the opportunities for success. The reason we suggest analyzing your weaknesses first, as this can help you identify the low hanging SEO fruit that’ll foster significant growth when executed against.

Below are some of the metrics and factors to track and monitor to find opportunities to improve your ecommerce site’s traffic.

Top Organic Keywords

One of the best places to start is with the existing top performing organic keywords. See which keywords are already ranking, getting a clear picture of where you rank, what keywords and topics perform the best, and how well you’ve targeted your market. Use this to determine where there is room for improvement.

For keywords that are ranking high, consider ways to optimize those pages further to increase the rank position of these web pages. The top few spots generate significant traffic, so you will want to aspire for these positions even if you have traffic ranking on the first SERP page.

Organic Position Distribution

Organic position distribution data displays how many webpages you have ranking in various positions, to give you a high-level view of how much presence you have in the organic SERPs. This helps you understand if you should be trying to struggle to get some pages ranking on a SERP page or if you should be battling it out for the top few SERP positions for a specific keyword.

Most organic search traffic is generated from the top 3 SERP results. These are likely your best performing web pages, and usually reflect areas of success. Your next greatest opportunities are the web pages ranking between positions 4 and 10, as they are close to the top of the results. With some optimization, they could compete for those top spots, drawing in much more substantial traffic.
Find The Opportunities For Wins Cont.

Organic Keywords Trend

Many tools will let you dive deeper into your organic keyword analytics by reviewing a 30 day time period of your ranking positions. You can get an idea of how many organic keywords rank within the SERP results, allowing you to see the movement of these positions over time. Use this information to identify those top spots that will be drastically improve your visibility, and the spots you’ve lost so you can adjust your keyword recapture strategy.

How To Pick Valuable Keywords

A great place to start is reviewing the top performing keywords currently on your ecommerce site. Examine the volume and CPC for the top ranking organic keywords on your site. These give you an idea of how much traffic this keyword brings in and how high the competition is. If people are paying to rank for the keyword, there is likely some search intent that fits your niche industry or business.

Pick a keyword that has a decent volume, but a CPC that you think you can reasonably compete with based on your resources and time available. Check the web page itself, to see what keywords are targeted most specifically. In many cases, you will want to focus your page to directly target a long-tail phrase, as these have less competition. Consider how to improve the format, structure, and content to target the keyword you can rank for and draw more traffic.

This will also help you identify topics that are missing a focus or that can be explored. You can find long-tail keywords that have not been targeted or have little competition, as well as keywords that are harder to compete with but draw large amounts of traffic.

How To Create Pages and Content Around Keywords

When planning out your content pieces, headers, and copy, be sure to focus your content around the target keywords you’ve identified in your research. Be sure to integrate them into the h-tags as well. Avoid going too off topic and keep the page focused on the niche you’re aiming for. Make sure product and category pages have copy text for search engines to crawl.

Remember not to keyword stuff, as was popular in the early 2000s; search engines penalize this harshly. Instead, write authentic, organic content that naturally integrates target keywords. For category pages, create a piece of content for the top of the page; for product pages, create a piece of content for the bottom of the page, so customers see products they are interested in first.

“Avoid keyword stuffing and going too far off topic when drafting content. Instead, keep the page focused on the niche you’re aiming for, and write authentic, organic content that naturally integrates target keywords.”
**Perks Beyond SEO**

**FOREWARD**

Search engine optimization has a clear goal and purpose on your page, helping drive your online presence. While there are many direct outcomes from using SEO effectively on your ecommerce site, it leads to growth and traction that you may not have originally planned. For example, organic SEO has an impact on how successful your paid initiatives are, as well as how various marketing campaigns hit. Below are a couple of other factors to consider and pay attention to when perfecting your site SEO.

**Quality Score**

Google uses a Quality Score to measure the relevancy of a keyword on a webpage. To help Google determine keyword relevance, be sure to use the SEO options available on all ecommerce platform providers, including categories, titles, h-tags, and paragraph descriptions. All of these help the search engine determine the topic of the page, and better gauge how relevant your keywords are.

If you’ve missed one of these elements, adding these SEO factors to your site will help increase its ranking within a few weeks. This will also lead to an increased Quality Score for keywords on your webpages. In turn, this quality score has a positive impact on your paid search and landing page scores. As your landing page score improves, it will rank higher and your CPC will come down. A poor landing page will lead to higher CPC rates and limit your revenue.

**Factors That Impact Quality Score:**

1. The page’s relevance to the user-search terms.
2. The competitiveness of the keyword and the page’s keyword density.
3. The listing’s click through rate from the SERPs.
4. The landing page experience – load time, usability, mobile friendliness...etc.
5. The page’s domain age, URL and authority.

**Scale Beyond Shopping**

A good category page that ranks high on Google for SEO and has a solid quality score on the text ads will let you scale beyond shopping. Use the shopping report query in Google Ads to identify high-volume keywords you are already converting on very well. Use great, SEO-optimized text ads that point customers towards the best landing page for converting your traffic.

Text ads provide a lot of SEO value and give you much greater control over your messaging than shopping ads. When comparing text to shopping ads, text ads outperform shopping ads on CTR, conversion rates, SERP ranking positions, promotions, and control. In many cases, text ads attract targeted audiences better, ensuring that you drive more valuable traffic to your site.
Organic vs Paid Traffic
Organic traffic has a longer, more evergreen impact on your business, and while it is harder to develop at first, it is more valuable than paid search. Executing the SEO strategies found in this guide will help you build domain authority, brand reputation, and grow your customer-base.

Focus on SEO Weaknesses
Identifying your SEO weaknesses first, can help you build strategies to address the low hanging SEO fruit that’ll foster significant growth. To identify the most impactful opportunities, analyze your paid and organic traffic, your backlinks and your overall keyword rankings.

Picking Keywords
When deciding the specific keywords to rank your site for, first identify your current top performers. Next, brainstorm related keywords and select those that have a decent volume and little-no competition. Pro-tip: long-tail keywords may have lower search volume, but they often have minimal competition so you can rank quickly for them.
SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) TOOLS FOR YOUR ECOMMERCE SITE

To get the most value from your content, you will want to use SEO tools that help you optimize your performance. There are a number of tools that can be used to plan, manage, and execute your SEO strategy.

In our experience, these are the most useful:

- **SEMRush**: Monitor current and historical rankings
- **Sitebulb**: Crawl your site
- **Moz**: Measure domain authority
- **Ahrefs**: Monitor backlinks
- Various Chrome Extensions

Let’s look at what each tool has to offer and how you could benefit from each.
**The Most Important SEO Tools**

**SEMRush: Monitor Current and Historical Rankings**

SEMRush is an all-in-one digital marketing toolkit, featuring SEO, paid traffic, social media, content and PR, and market research services and management. Monitor your current and historical rankings to get an idea of how you are performing, and how you’ve improved. Compare your analytics to past metrics and performance benchmarks to gauge how you are doing.

SEMRush offers a number of SEO services, including some of these core features:
- Technical SEO audits
- Position tracking for pages
- Organic traffic lead generation ideas

Use SEMRush for Keyword research, competitor research, and traffic analytics. Monitor your performance and identify opportunities.

**Sitebulb: Crawl Your Site**

Sitebulb is a comprehensive SEO tool with the core focus of helping you perform a thorough website audit and clearly communicate your findings. Get audit scores, hints prioritized by context, flexible PDF reports, audit comparisons, URL explorers, and data visualization so you can draw insights about your website and make improvements. It all starts with a valuable, accurate site audit.

**Moz: Measure Domain Authority**

Moz is one of the most popular and reliable SEO resources, with software that will help you measure domain authority and improve your online presence and engagement. Get data that will help you increase traffic, rankings, and visibility in search engine results, allowing you to effectively manage your SEO practices.

Moz Pro is a complete, all-in-one SEO toolset that offers site audits, rank tracking, backlink analysis, and keyword research. Designed for SEO specialists, Moz has an intuitively designed software to make it simple and efficient to manage your site in search.

**Ahrefs: Monitor Backlinks**

Ahrefs supports the world’s largest index of live backlinks, updating their index every 15 minutes. Simply enter a URL to review backlinks, along with relevant SEO metrics. This helps you not only get a complete picture of existing backlinks, but also how this can be improved or leveraged.

Ahrefs can facilitate many of your SEO analytics needs, with organic search reporting on competitors, keywords explorer to track keywords and ideas, and content analysis of how your content performs, and a rank tracker that allows you to track positions for your pages. You can even set up alerts that help you manage your SEO initiatives efficiently.
The Most Important SEO Chrome Extensions

FOREWORD

On top of SEO tools, there are a number of browser extensions that can be used. We recommend using Google Chrome, and Chrome extensions, as they are ideally suited for optimizing SEO for Google search, which is the most popular search engine worldwide. Chrome extensions are extremely convenient, as they operate in your browser, and can be accessed and hidden easily.

Below are two of the best Google Chrome extensions to use for SEO: SEO Minion and MOZ.

SEO Minion

SEO Minion is a free, easy-to-use Chrome extension, giving you insights as you go. It will help you analyze on-page SEO, including the HTML of your website, and get alerts that will help you optimize your pages. Manage links by easily identifying all internal and external links on a webpage, and check for any broken links, making it easy to fix, remove, or replace these. Get a SERP preview, so you can see how your page will be displayed in the SERP, including your page title, meta description, and URL.

Moz: Measure Domain Authority

Moz is one of the most popular and reliable SEO resources, with software that will help you measure domain authority and improve your online presence and engagement. Get data that will help you increase traffic, rankings, and visibility in search engine results, allowing you to effectively manage your SEO practices.

Moz Pro is a complete, all-in-one SEO toolset that offers site audits, rank tracking, backlink analysis, and keyword research. Designed for SEO specialists, Moz has an intuitively designed software to make it simple and efficient to manage your site in search.

SUMMARY OF LEARNINGS

SEO TOOLS

Data Informed Decisions
The more information and data that you have about your current SEO and site performance, the more impactful your efforts will be. Use the tools we've identified in this chapter to plan, manage, and execute your personalized SEO strategy.
CHAPTER 4

TIPS TO CONVERT ECOMMERCE SITE TRAFFIC IN 2020

It takes a lot of coordination to get customers to your checkout and in a position to buy. On average, 70% of customers abandon their checkout, according to a collection of 41 studies done between 2006 and 2018. To improve your conversion rate, you will need to develop strategies to optimize your ecommerce site for conversions.

To help you do this effectively, we’ll cover the following:

• What leads to checkout abandonment?
• User and customer experience (UX/CX)
• Automation
• Communication
• Optimize site performance

To start, let’s dive into what causes cart abandonment, and then move on to strategies to improve your ecommerce site for conversions.
The Factors That Lead to Checkout Abandonment

There are a number of factors that lead to checkout abandonment, and they vary according to the industry you are in, the product you sell, your target audience, and your unique business needs. The best way to combat checkout abandonment and recover lost sales is to identify the reasons why customers abandon, and develop strategies based on these factors.

The chart below shows the main reasons for checkout abandonment, according to 41 studies collected by Baymard Institute.

Once you know why customers are abandoning checkout on your platform, you can then plan ways to improve your ecommerce store and limit abandonment. To help you improve your ecommerce site, we’ve broken down tips by category to make it more accessible.
Despite the technical elements, always remember that you are designing an ecommerce and checkout experience for actual people. Always keep the customer journey at the front of your mind, and design for your customer above all other factors.

When designing your ecommerce site, consider the user experience factors covered in the next few sections.

**Forced Login**

A forced login can help you give customers a faster checkout and a personalized experience, as you have a method of contacting them and information about them. However, forcing customers to login before buying is a leading cause of checkout abandonment. It creates a direct obstacle for customers when they are in a position to buy.

This is often known as a ‘Login Wall,’ and should be avoided at all costs. Instead, never force login at checkout, and make it easy for customers to proceed without signing in. You should also avoid requiring an email for guest checkout, instead letting customers proceed unhindered.

**Guest Checkout Experience**

Always design your checkout with a prominent, clear guest checkout option. In fact, you should lead with a guest checkout, so that visitors can buy without any issues. This will ensure that first-time and one-time buyers can proceed to checkout without being discouraged.

If you have a member or user sign in, make it easy for customers to access as an option, letting them save time on checkout or save items using a wishlist.
Free Shipping

Shipping costs often lead customers to abandon their checkout, especially if they are not expecting them. In most cases, free shipping directly results in higher conversion rates. Whenever possible, offer customers 2-day, free shipping. For many businesses, this is a standard delivery method and time-frame. Offering this will help you compete and stand out.

When you can offer free shipping, make it your default option for customers. If this isn’t possible, offer free shipping over a set value. This way, you ensure you offer free shipping when it is still feasible for your business.

Simplify Checkout Steps

Customers shop online for convenience, expedience, and simplicity. You should continuously work to simplify your checkout, streamlining the experience for your customers. Design your checkout to provide essential information, guide users, and make the process efficient.

Remove any unnecessary form fields, steps, and clicks, making checkout as fast, efficient, and seamless as possible. You should never stop simplifying your checkout, as new technology makes it possible to improve the process.

**Pro Tip:** Future-proof your business, increase shopper satisfaction and receive 100% fraudulent chargeback coverage -- all while receiving best-in-class order approval rates with Bolt’s checkout experience platform. Optimized hundreds of times, based on the results of the millions of shopper touchpoints in A/B tests, the Bolt checkout is sure to delight your shoppers.
**Automation**

**Google Places Autocomplete (API)**

Customers shop online for convenience, expedience, and simplicity. You should continuously work to simplify your checkout, streamlining the experience for your customers. Design your checkout to provide essential information, guide users, and make the process efficient.

Remove any unnecessary form fields, steps, and clicks, making checkout as fast, efficient, and seamless as possible. You should never stop simplifying your checkout, as new technology makes it possible to steadily improve the process for customers.

**Communication**

**FOREWARD**

Keeping your customers in the dark is never in your interest. Communicate effectively with customers, giving them any information you think will be important when buying, receiving, and using the product. While you want to market to customers, falsely representing your products will only lead to future returns and a poor reputation.

Honesty, transparently, and effectively communicate information to customers on your ecommerce store and throughout checkout, ensuring satisfaction with the service they receive from you. In the next sections you’ll discover the types of information you should clearly communicate to customers on your ecommerce website.

**Product Information**

Without the ability to see and test the product, detailed information is essential for optimizing online ecommerce conversions. Provide customers a detailed description of the product, along with anything that will inform their decision to purchase. You should be honest and candid, but attempt to convey the value of the product and how they will benefit.

Always include an accurate product description, accompanied by other pertinent information, such as specifications.
Communication - Cont.

Warranty Details

A warranty gives customers the peace of mind they need when buying. It shows that the company believes in their product, and stands behind it and their customers. This is true in the store, and also online, as customers have less ability to test the products before purchase.

Provide warranty information to customers prior to - and at the time of - purchase, making sure they know what is covered under the warranty and how to claim it if needed.

Shipping Information

Shipping and delivery can make or break the experience for a customer. Ordering online is all about saving customers time and energy, giving them an ideal experience. Give customers shipping information as early in the process as you can, including the delivery date, time, and location.

Always provide this information at the time of checkout, but if possible, give them information about shipping earlier than the checkout stage.

Returns Information

When buying online, customers are unable to try on sizes, feel materials, and visualize the product in the same way as they do when shopping in a store. A return policy gives customers the safety of knowing they return the item if they are dissatisfied. While this option is available to customers, few will actually return the item. However, having a clear, trustworthy return policy will be enough to push some customers to convert.
Optimize Site Performance

FOREWARD

SEO ranking comes down to a number of factors, one of which is technical performance. While this may not seem closely related to the SEO strategies you are used to or that seem obvious, technical capabilities and performance of your ecommerce site has a huge impact on whether search engines give your page authority. The following tactics are great ways to optimize site performance.

Pro Tip: Skip ahead two pages for a visualization of these tips.

Cache The Latest Version Of Your Pages

Search engines will index and cache a version of web pages it crawls as a back-up. This cached version is how the search engine determines if the page meets the search query. Almost any search result has a cached page. It’s good practice to cache the latest versions of your page, ensuring that your browser doesn’t have to load the page again.

Cache the latest versions of your pages to avoid excessive server requests for mobile browsers. This will give customers a more responsive webpage and help with web crawling and indexing.

Trim Down Your Javascript Parsing

Javascript parsing involves analyzing HTML and CSS and converting it to a format that can be run inside the browser. It parses script tags and tokenizes content in order to display content effectively. When the parser encounters CSS script tags, rendering is blocked and parsing pauses. This will slow down the responsiveness of the webpage.

It’s best to defer the parsing of redundant script tags, as this can slow your web page down. This will improve your ecommerce site load times and responsiveness.

Apply The CSS3 and HTML5 Frameworks

CSS3 and HTML5 are the most current versions of their respective technologies. Both feature enhanced functionality, customization, and capabilities. For the best webpage performance and user design, use the most current versions of CSS and HTML – CSS3 and HTML5. These web page frameworks are optimized for mobile, and offer standardized experiences using different browsers.
Optimize Site Performance - Cont.

Reduce The Number of Page Redirects

Page redirects guide users to your most relevant, up-to-date webpages. However, redirecting means customers have to move to a new page, which then needs to be loaded. This always leads to a slower, more clunky user experience. Whenever possible, reduce the number of redirects, giving customers a smoother ecommerce experience.

You should never use a double-redirect, as it is extremely clunky and could be reduced to a single redirect. You should also remove any redirects that contain `http-equiv="refresh"`, as these result in automatic page reloads after a set amount of time. This will cause the users page to be reloaded regularly during use.

Compress Your Product Images

This is a simple - but often overlooked - factor related to conversion rate optimization. Copy text takes up little storage space, and loads quickly. Images and other multimedia content take up more storage and much longer to load on a web page. This slows down the user experience for customers, or gives them a clunky page with some elements loading slower than others.

You should always compress images before loading them into your CMS. There are even scripts you can run on your site that will automatically reduce file sizes and optimize images for your site.

Adopt a Content Delivery Network

A content delivery network (CDN) is a system of distributed servers that deliver web pages and content to users based on the geographic location of the recipient. These networks allow customers to get webpages supported by the closest server to that customer. This ensures that they get a faster, more responsive load times and site performance.

Minify Your Style Sheets and Javascript

Minifying style sheets and Javascript essentially refers to optimizing source code to be as simple and streamlined as possible, taking up less space and using less lines. The more you can reduce source code formatting and content, the smoother your page will load and operate. Remove any redundant characters in your source code, such as formatting, code comments, and function and variable names).

Apply AJAX For Faster Mobile Browsing

AJAX operates in the background, allowing data to be exchanged and displayed without having to reload a webpage. Use AJAX to ensure your webpage is fast and responsive, on both desktop and mobile devices.
Optimize Site Performance

**BONUS INFOGRAPHIC**

Forward this infographic to your dev team to ensure you’re using these site-optimization strategies.

1. **Cache Your Pages**
   Cache the latest versions of your pages to avoid excessive server requests for mobile browsers.

2. **Apply AJAX**
   Apply AJAX to ensure your mobile site loads content quickly, even after redirects and hard refreshes.

3. **Trim Javascript Parsing**
   Reduce your mobile page load time by deferring the parsing of redundant <script> tags.

4. **Reduce The Number of Redirects**
   Reduce the number of redirects to the bare minimum, never use a double-redirect, and remove any redirects that contain this attribute: http-equiv="refresh".

5. **Apply CSS3 and HTML5**
   These frameworks are lightweight, flexible, and optimized for mobile, providing consistent experiences across all browsers.

6. **Compress Product Images**
   This is one of the biggest contributors to slow load times. Run a script on your site that automatically optimizes product images.

7. **Adopt a Content Delivery Network (CDN)**
   CDNs ensure faster load times for shoppers by determining their geographic location and delivering content using the closest server in the network.

8. **Minify Style Sheets & Javascript**
   Remove all redundant characters (including code comments, formatting, and longer-than-needed function and variable names) from your source code.
SUMMARY OF LEARNINGS

CONVERTING SHOPPERS

Reasons & Solutions for Checkout Abandonment
Shoppers abandon checkout due to a number of factors, but by improving your customer experience (CX), implementing automation into your flow, improving your communication and optimizing your site performance you can eliminate many of the underlying issues.

Keep The Shopper in Mind
Perhaps the most important factor to shopper satisfaction and high-order completion rates is the experience they receive. When designing your ecommerce site and checkout flow, remember to keep the shopper in mind -- they desire a quick, elegant and frictionless process. Avoid forced-logins and account creation at all costs and streamline your checkout to eliminate as many unnecessary clicks and fields as possible.

Communication
Be as clear and transparent with your shoppers as possible throughout the purchase flow. Little things like adding return, warranty and shipping information on the product page, and providing estimated shipping times in the cart can have huge impacts on your conversion rate.
CHAPTER 5

ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS: SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Hopefully you’ve found the information and instructional content in these chapters useful, helping you get a grasp on ecommerce SEO optimization. To make sure you can take what you’ve learned and apply it to your own ecommerce store, we’ve summarized the actionable takeaways covered throughout this guide to growing organic SEO traffic.

We’ll cover the following for you to perfect SEO on your ecommerce site and gain more organic traffic:

- How to improve ecommerce site search engine optimization (SEO)
- Ecommerce site checkout optimization

To make sure you can grow your organic traffic using SEO, we’ve summarized the actionable takeaways and the key points from this eBook. Refer to these to make the most of your ecommerce SEO efforts.

Reminder: To share the infographic from two pages ago with your developers to ensure you’re optimizing your site performance.
How To Improve Ecommerce Site Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

FOREWORD

Search engine optimization tactics and technology are constantly evolving, and you need to adapt to stay relevant. While the tools and technology changes regularly, there are some basic tactics for optimizing your ecommerce site for SEO.

Below are a few of the main things to consider and steps for ensuring you optimize your site effectively.

Take Time To Research

When selecting SEO keywords, you want to do more than just pick what you think is the most obvious or applicable keywords. Optimizing for SEO is more than just keyword stuffing, and involves a clear content strategy based on ranking in SERPs. Picking random keywords can mean you are competing against major companies with more resources and site authority than you can reasonably gain through organic SEO.

Research keyword volumes and competition, using this to gauge the potential for you to rank for the keyword. Choose keywords that have room for you to rank for, and that you can compete with others for. Don’t compete against large brands for extremely difficult keywords, as these will require a lot of effort and will typically show little returns. Instead, choose keywords that apply to your business closely but are reasonable to rank for.

Focus On Low Hanging Fruit

It’s best to go after low hanging fruit, selecting the best potential for ranking high. Assess the pages you have and the ranking positions you are getting. Review the keywords you are already ranking for, especially those that are in the top SERP page.

Rather than starting fresh with new keywords, optimize the pages that are already ranking to gain higher positions, as much more traffic converts in the top few SERP positions. Isolate top page rankings and build them to the number 1 spot, expanding your strategy after focusing on these easier rankings.
How To Improve Ecommerce Site Search Engine Optimization (SEO) - Cont.

The Main Elements to Improve

While many factors affect SEO rankings, there are a few key elements vital to the authority of your site. All of the following are essential for perfecting your ecommerce site SEO.

Titles

Title tags are an HTML element that dictates the title of a webpage. It will automatically be formatted as your H1 title. It also has a major impact on SEO, as your page title is a main indicator of the topic and content of the web page.

The title tag is displayed on the search engine results pages (SERPs) as the clickable link, at the top of your browser, and on social pages. This title - and the layout - will be the first impression of the content when customers find your webpage via organic search. More than impacting your customer’s experience, the title tag is a main way search engines determine whether it will answer the user’s search query.

H-Tags

H-tags refer to the HTML header structure, which is universally used for structuring online content. These tags tell the browser how to display each header. This allows you to organize content for your users, helping them skim using headings and making the organization of material clear.

These h-tags are just as important to your users as search engines, as search engines crawl them the same way a reader would. Search engines use the h-tags to determine the layout, structure, and content of the web page, indexing it accordingly.

URL Structure

Always label pages accurately, creating a clear URL structure and using focused, relevant keywords based on the content. Never duplicate a URL title, making sure to label every page uniquely.
Content

Content - both quantity and quality - is an essential part of your SEO strategy. While product pages link customers to what you sell, without content on the page, it’s harder for the search engine to determine what the web page is about. You should always include written content on pages, even if they are category or product pages. This will help the search engine determine what the page is about, index it properly, and return it accurately according to search queries.

It’s important to write content with SEO in mind. Many businesses will refer to this specifically as SEO writing, as it needs to be written uniquely. You will need to integrate appropriate, high-value keywords and phrases that help search engines determine the information and purpose of your webpage.

Leverage Your Work Across Channels

Organic SEO tactics are time-consuming, requiring planning, research, and execution. It’s difficult, and often slow to build, but will bring you long-term gains over time. It’s important to put these efforts to best use, leveraging the on-page, organic SEO efforts with your off-page, social media, and paid strategies.

Paid search and social media content are ideal ways of getting more out of your organic traffic, as you can expand the reach of your organic SEO content and get more traffic to these landing pages.
**Ecommerce Site Checkout Optimization**

**FOREWARD**

When people think of organic SEO, they often think of on-page tactics and content. In the context of ecommerce sites, the shopping and product pages typically get the most attention. The fact is, your checkout is an essential component of your ecommerce site, and greatly impacts your conversion optimization rate.

You should continuously work to optimize your checkout for better performance and a greater customer experience. Here are some of the core strategies for perfecting checkout to improve your conversion rate.

**Automate Wherever Possible**

Search engine optimization is an exhaustive task, requiring time and effort to manage and perfect. You should automate processes and analytics wherever possible, saving you valuable time. You can automate abandoned cart recovery emails, analytics tracking and measurement, and abandonment notifications.

You also want to automate on the customers’ end, saving them time on checkout and helping them complete their order faster. Use Google Place Autocomplete (API) to have address information automatically populate when customers begin entering information into form fields.

**Lead With Free Shipping**

If possible, you should always offer free shipping, as it greatly increases conversion rates, even more so than percentage and dollar value discounts! When offering free shipping, make sure it’s the first - and default - option for customers. Customers that aren’t expecting this will be happily surprised, and more likely to convert. Some customers will automatically abandon when free shipping is not available, looking for an option with free shipping. If you don’t make your free shipping option clear, customers may not realize and could abandon checkout.

**Provide Shoppers With All The Information They Need**

Lack of information prior to checkout can lead customers to abandon checkout, as they don’t have all the details to make their decision. New information at the time of checkout means they need to reevaluate their purchase.

Offer customers clear, comprehensive product descriptions, product images, warranty information, and return policy details. The more information you give customers upfront, the more informed they are by the time they reach the checkout. This will increase their chances of converting.
Ecommerce Site Checkout Optimization - Cont.

Be Transparent With Shipping, Processing, and Other Fees

One of the leading reasons for checkout abandonment is surprise costs at the time of checkout. Customers that are not expecting additional fees or expenses will be caught off guard, rethinking their purchase at the point of checkout. To reduce checkout abandonment, you want customers making this value-decision before getting to checkout. Provide customers as much information about total costs upfront to ensure they don’t abandon.

Optimize Site Performance

When thinking of SEO, the first things that come to mind is SEO optimized content on your web pages. However, an integral factor that contributes to SERP rankings is a webpage’s technical performance, such as load times, responsiveness, and functionality.

There are a number of things to do to improve the performance of your ecommerce site, all of which will help improve the experience for customers. Reminder: To share the infographic from page 28 with your developers to ensure you’re optimizing your site performance.

Lead With Guest Checkout

Forcing customers to create an account and register with your service directly leads to checkout abandonment, as it adds steps to the process and slows the user down. Always offer customers a guest checkout option, so that visitors and one-time buyers can purchase unencumbered. It’s best to lead with your guest checkout, making it an easy, accessible option so customers don’t leave thinking they have to sign in.
We hope you took some valuable lessons, tactics, and skills from this guide for growing organic traffic using search engine optimization (SEO). **Take what you’ve learned, and apply it to your own ecommerce website.**

Identify what strategies draw the most traffic, and analyze how valuable the traffic you are getting is based on conversions and revenue. Find areas where you can improve and find new opportunities to create successes, allowing you to grow your organic traffic and compete in your industry.

Continuously reanalyze and readjust as needed to stay up-to-date with SEO best practices and technical performance standards. Over time, you will gain traction and see your audience grow, conversion rate improve, and revenue increase.

**Pro Tip:** You can future-proof your business, increase shopper satisfaction and receive 100% fraudulent chargeback coverage -- all while receiving best-in-class order approval rates with Bolt’s checkout experience platform. Optimized hundreds of times, based on the results of the millions of shopper touchpoints in A/B tests, the Bolt checkout is sure to elevate your brand experience.
BOLT is the world’s first checkout experience platform. Bolt’s checkout is optimized for any device and platform, and has fraud-detection built in. Our goal is to make sure nothing gets in the way when shoppers want to buy. We currently support retailers on Magento, WooCommerce, BigCommerce, Salesforce Commerce Cloud and custom-built sites.

ABOUT US:

LOGICAL POSITION is a digital marketing agency focused on growing businesses online. One of the first 30 Premier Google Partners and Microsoft’s Global Partner of the Year in both 2018 and 2019, LP has over 6,300 clients (3,000 eCommerce) and 750 employees across 9 US offices.

ABOUT US: