

Shopify SEO Checklist

Audit your store — find the gaps — fix what matters most

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HIGH Fix first. Biggest impact on visibility, indexability, traffic or sales.

MED Important. Do after HIGH items.

LOW Incremental gains. Good to have.

Note: How to use this checklist: This is your reference document. Work through each section in order. Complete all HIGH items before moving to MED. The → arrow under each item is your immediate next action. The Why: line explains what's at stake — useful when deciding what to prioritise. HIGH items are not all ranking factors in a narrow sense — some affect indexability, some affect visibility in Shopping, some affect trust and conversions. All of them matter. The per-page checklist at the end is for auditing individual product and collection pages. Section 8 (Conversion sanity check) belongs at the start if you're already getting traffic but not enough sales.

1 Foundation — Store Setup

Non-negotiables. If any of these are missing, no amount of on-page optimisation will compensate.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Store is live, publicly accessible, on a custom domain, and not password-protected → In Shopify Admin: Online Store > Preferences > remove the password. Confirm your custom domain is connected under Settings > Domains. <i>Why: If your store is blocked or on a myshopify.com subdomain, Google cannot crawl or rank you as a real business.</i>	HIGH
☐	Google Search Console is connected and verified → Go to search.google.com/search-console > Add Property. Use Domain property with DNS verification where possible — this covers all URL variants. Or use URL prefix with HTML tag, GA4, or GTM. Data collects within 48 hours. <i>Why: GSC is the only direct line you have to how Google sees your store — indexing issues, ranking drops, and Core Web Vitals all surface here first.</i>	HIGH
☐	Sitemap is submitted in Google Search Console and accessible at yourstore.com/sitemap.xml → In GSC: Sitemaps > enter sitemap.xml > Submit. Shopify generates and maintains this automatically. Check you can load it in a browser first. <i>Why: The sitemap tells Google which pages you actually want indexed — without submitting it, Google has to guess and often misses new products.</i>	HIGH
☐	Google Analytics 4 (GA4) is installed and tracking → Use the Google & YouTube app in Shopify, or Customer Events in Shopify settings. Avoid manually pasting a Measurement ID — it may not capture all events. Confirm tracking in GA4 > Reports > Realtime. <i>Why: Without GA4 you cannot link traffic to revenue, which means you cannot tell which SEO work is worth the effort.</i>	HIGH
☐	HTTPS is confirmed active (store URL starts with https://) → Shopify provides SSL automatically. If you see a 'Not Secure' warning, contact Shopify support — it may be a domain DNS issue. <i>Why: Google has used HTTPS as a ranking signal since 2014, and browsers actively warn buyers off non-HTTPS pages.</i>	HIGH

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	No critical indexing issues in GSC > Indexing > Pages → Review the 'Not indexed' tab. 'Crawled – currently not indexed' often means Google judged the content as thin or duplicated — improve content quality first. Fix or redirect 404 errors only where the page previously had traffic, backlinks, or internal links. <i>Why: If your money pages aren't indexed, no amount of on-page work or links will help them rank — indexing is the prerequisite for everything else.</i>	HIGH
☐	301 redirects are in place for any URLs that have changed since launch → In Shopify: Online Store > Navigation > URL Redirects. Add a redirect for every old URL that has changed. Critical if you migrated from another platform. <i>Why: Lost rankings and backlinks from old URLs are recoverable with a 301 — without one, that equity is gone.</i>	HIGH
☐	All key products are active, published to Online Store, and not accidentally hidden or unlisted → In Shopify: Products > filter by 'Unavailable on Online Store'. Products not active and published to the Online Store channel won't appear in your sitemap and won't be discoverable. <i>Why: It's common to find best-sellers accidentally unpublished after a draft/edit — this single audit often surfaces lost revenue.</i>	HIGH
☐	Google Merchant Center is set up and products are synced with free listings enabled → Go to merchants.google.com > create an account > connect your Shopify store using the Google & YouTube app. Enable free product listings. <i>Why: Free Shopping listings are usually the fastest route to product visibility for a new store — they appear before your organic rankings catch up.</i>	HIGH
☐	Mobile experience has been checked on a real device and in PageSpeed Insights → Open your store on a phone and walk through a product page and checkout. Then run pagespeed.web.dev on your homepage and a product page — review the Mobile tab. <i>Why: Google ranks on mobile-first indexing, and 60–75% of Shopify traffic is mobile — a slow or broken mobile UX caps both rankings and revenue.</i>	MED
☐	FAQ schema is not being added purely for Google rich results → FAQ rich results no longer appear in Google Search from May 2026. Keep FAQ content on pages if useful for customers — but don't invest time adding FAQ schema expecting a visible SEO result. <i>Why: Time spent on deprecated schema is time not spent on schema Google still uses (product, review, breadcrumb).</i>	MED

2 Keyword Strategy

Every page you optimise needs a keyword plan behind it. This section covers your overall approach before you touch any page.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Every key product page and collection page has a primary keyword assigned to it → Make a simple spreadsheet: one row per page, columns for URL, primary keyword, and search volume. If a page has no keyword assigned, start with Google Keyword Planner. <i>Why: Without a keyword per page, you can't optimise consistently — and you risk two pages competing for the same term.</i>	HIGH

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Primary keywords on product and collection pages match buyer intent, not just topic relevance → Search your target keyword in Google and look at the top 10 results. If they are blog posts or guides rather than product/shop pages, that keyword belongs on a blog post — not a product page. Swap to a more transactional variant. <i>Why: Google ranks based on what searchers expect to find — targeting a research keyword with a product page means competing against content Google won't display you alongside.</i>	HIGH
☐	You are targeting bottom-of-funnel keywords on commercial pages → Look for terms with clear buying intent: 'buy', 'best', 'UK', 'shop', specific product attributes, sizes, colours. Lower volume but far higher conversion rates. Use Google autocomplete to find them. <i>Why: 1,000 visits for 'leather wallet' converts worse than 50 visits for 'mens slim leather wallet UK' — intent beats volume at small-store scale.</i>	HIGH
☐	No two important pages are targeting the same keyword → If two pages target the same term, Google may rank neither. Audit your keyword spreadsheet and reassign — give each page a distinct primary focus. Secondary variations are fine to share. <i>Why: Keyword cannibalisation splits ranking signals between your own pages and almost always leaves both ranking worse than one consolidated page would.</i>	MED
☐	You have checked search volume for your target keywords and they have measurable demand → Use Google Keyword Planner or Ahrefs free keyword generator. Don't build strategy around terms that show zero volume — but don't dismiss specific buyer-intent terms just because volume looks low. <i>Why: Long-tail terms are systematically undercounted by tools — but if every tool returns zero, demand probably isn't there.</i>	MED
☐	Keyword difficulty has been checked and your targets are realistic for your store's current authority → Use Ahrefs or Semrush to check difficulty scores. For a newer store, prioritise terms where the current top results look beatable — thin content, weak sites, or poor matches to the query. <i>Why: Targeting terms above your authority wastes months of work — a realistic 'win' moves the needle faster than chasing a flagship keyword you can't crack.</i>	MED
☐	You have a list of informational keywords for blog content to attract buyers earlier in their research → These are 'how to', 'best way to', 'what is', 'vs' queries. Use Google's 'People Also Ask' and autocomplete to find them. Pair each with a blog post or guide. <i>Why: Buyers research before they buy — informational content captures them earlier in the funnel and feeds your remarketing audiences.</i>	MED
☐	You have looked at which keywords your main competitors rank for → Use Ahrefs' free backlink and keyword tools or the paid version. Filter for keywords they rank in positions 4–20 — pages where they are visible but vulnerable. <i>Why: Competitors have already done the keyword research for you — borrowing their gap analysis is the fastest way to find winnable terms.</i>	LOW

3 On-Page SEO

Apply these to every product page, collection page, and blog post. Use the per-page checklist at the end for individual page audits.

Title Tags & Meta Descriptions

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Every page has a unique title tag with the primary keyword in the first 50 characters → Shopify: Product/Collection/Page > 'Search engine listing' > edit title. Put the keyword early. Aim for 55–60 characters. If Google rewrites your title, a keyword-first approach maximises the chance yours is used. <i>Why: The title tag is still the single biggest on-page ranking signal, and the first thing a searcher reads in the SERP.</i>	HIGH
☐	Every page has a unique meta description under 155 characters → Write it as ad copy — the goal is the click, not the ranking. Include the keyword naturally, highlight what makes the product worth clicking, end with a soft CTA. <i>Why: Meta descriptions don't influence ranking directly, but CTR does — better descriptions raise click-through and lift rankings indirectly.</i>	MED

URLs

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	New page URLs are short, descriptive, and include the main product or category term → Edit the URL in 'Search engine listing' before publishing. Hyphens, no stop words, under 6 words. E.g. /products/leather-card-wallet not /products/the-slim-minimalist-card-wallet-for-men. <i>Why: Shorter, keyword-clear URLs get better click-through and are easier for Google to associate with intent.</i>	MED
☐	Existing URLs that already rank or have backlinks have NOT been changed → If a page is getting organic traffic (check GSC > Performance), leave its URL alone. Only change it if you're setting up a 301 redirect in Online Store > Navigation > URL Redirects. <i>Why: Changing a URL without a redirect loses all its rankings and backlinks overnight — recovery often takes months.</i>	HIGH

Page Content

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Every page has one clear H1 that includes the target keyword → On Shopify product pages, the H1 is set by the product title. Make sure the title is descriptive and keyword-relevant — not a brand-internal code. Check via browser Inspect: right-click > Inspect > search for '<h1>'. <i>Why: The H1 confirms to Google what the page is about — when title tag and H1 align, ranking signals reinforce each other.</i>	MED
☐	Product descriptions are original and written in your own voice — not copied from a supplier → Paste your current description into Google in quotes. If it appears on other sites, rewrite entirely. Focus on who it's for, what problem it solves, specific details only a user would know. <i>Why: Supplier-copied descriptions get treated as duplicate content — Google picks one canonical winner and it usually isn't the smaller store.</i>	HIGH

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Content covers the topic fully, including related terms and questions a buyer would have → After writing, ask: 'What would my customer want to know that I haven't answered yet?' Add those answers. Use Google's People Also Ask boxes to find natural sub-topics. <i>Why: Pages that fully answer a query rank above pages that partially answer it — depth is a stronger signal than density.</i>	MED
☐	Collection pages have unique introductory copy (not just a grid of products) → Collection pages are often your highest-ranking opportunity — they match broad category searches like 'mens leather wallets UK'. Add 50–150 words above or below the grid: what it is, who it's for, what makes yours worth choosing. <i>Why: Collection pages are where the high-volume category keywords live — an empty grid gives Google nothing to rank.</i>	HIGH
☐	No duplicate content across pages → Check for copied descriptions across similar products. Use Screaming Frog (free up to 500 URLs) to flag duplicate titles or meta descriptions — these point to duplicate content issues. <i>Why: Duplicate descriptions across SKUs make Google pick one to rank and suppress the rest — a common reason variant products never show up.</i>	MED
☐	Blog posts have clear H2 and H3 subheadings that include secondary keywords → Structure each post with subheadings answering specific sub-questions. These often appear as standalone answers in Google and pull in additional traffic beyond the main keyword. <i>Why: Subheadings get extracted as featured snippets and People Also Ask answers — extra surface area for the same post.</i>	MED

Product Feed Titles (Google Merchant Center, Meta, Pinterest feeds)

This is separate from platform-native search optimisation covered later. Your Shopify product titles flow directly into product feeds — Google Shopping, Meta ads, Pinterest Shopping. Feed algorithms use the title to match your products to search queries on those platforms.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Product titles are structured for feed clarity: product type, key attribute, material/use, brand → Review your top 20 products and rewrite any titles that are brand-internal names rather than descriptive search terms. Structure: [Product Type] – [Key Attribute] – [Material/Use case] – [Brand if relevant]. E.g. 'Personalised Baby Blanket – Cotton Knit – Pink' not 'The Amelia'. This single change often improves Google Shopping and Meta performance significantly. <i>Why: Feed algorithms match query → title literally — a poetic product name gives them nothing to match against, while a descriptive one wins both Shopping and ad relevance.</i>	HIGH

Images

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	All product images have descriptive alt text → Shopify: Products > select a product > click each image > edit alt text. Plain-language description of what's shown. Include the keyword where it fits naturally.	HIGH

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
	<i>Why: Alt text is a ranking signal for Google Images and the only thing screen readers can read — both bring traffic you'd otherwise miss.</i>	
☐	Image file names are descriptive before upload → Rename files on your computer before uploading: blue-linen-shirt-mens.jpg not IMG_4829.jpg. Shopify uses the filename in the image URL. <i>Why: Image URL is the second-strongest signal for Google Images after alt text — a descriptive filename costs nothing to add up-front.</i>	MED
☐	Images are compressed before uploading — smallest file size that still looks sharp → Use TinyPNG, Squoosh, or Shopify's free image resizer. Product thumbnails should compress to under 150–200KB. Shopify serves images in WebP automatically. <i>Why: Image weight is the #1 cause of slow Shopify pages — and slow product pages cost rankings and conversions simultaneously.</i>	HIGH

Internal Links

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Product pages link to the parent collection and to related products → Shopify themes include a 'Related products' section by default — make sure it's enabled. Check breadcrumbs are working (Home > Collection > Product), as this is both UX and an SEO signal. <i>Why: Internal links pass ranking authority between pages — well-connected pages rank better than orphaned ones.</i>	MED
☐	Every blog post links to at least one relevant product or collection page → Add a natural in-text link or 'Shop the range' CTA at the bottom. Use descriptive anchor text. <i>Why: Without this, blog traffic doesn't convert — content earns the visit, internal links earn the revenue.</i>	MED
☐	All internal links use descriptive anchor text → Change 'click here' or 'read more' to something descriptive: 'shop our leather wallets', 'see our skincare range'. <i>Why: Anchor text tells Google what the linked page is about — generic anchors waste the signal.</i>	MED
☐	No broken internal links on key pages → Install the free 'Check My Links' Chrome extension and run it on your homepage, top product pages, and key blog posts. Red links are broken — update or remove. <i>Why: Broken internal links bleed PageRank and frustrate buyers mid-journey — both effects compound at scale.</i>	HIGH

4 Technical SEO

Shopify handles most technical requirements automatically. Focus your effort on the items below where action is still needed. The Shopify-specific landmines subsection covers the traps unique to this platform.

Core Technical

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Core Web Vitals pass in PageSpeed Insights: LCP under 2.5s, CLS under 0.1, INP under 200ms → Test homepage, product page, and collection page — use Mobile tab. Note recommendations under 'Opportunities' and 'Diagnostics'. Fix highest-impact items first. <i>Why: Core Web Vitals are confirmed ranking signals — Google explicitly uses them as a tiebreaker between otherwise similar pages.</i>	HIGH
☐	PageSpeed Insights has been reviewed to identify the actual causes of slow pages → Run on homepage, product page, collection page. Images and unused app scripts are most common, but also check render-blocking third-party scripts (chat widgets, review carousels, exit pop-ups). Fix what PageSpeed surfaces — not assumptions. <i>Why: Generic 'make it faster' advice wastes time — the actual culprits on Shopify are usually 2–3 specific apps you can identify in 5 minutes.</i>	HIGH
☐	Unused Shopify apps have been uninstalled → Apps > review every installed app. Many inject JavaScript that loads on every page even after you stop using the app. Uninstall — don't just disable — anything you don't actively use. <i>Why: Each app adds JS that runs on every page view — three dead apps can add a second or more to your LCP.</i>	HIGH
☐	Product schema is validated and passing — test before adding any app → Test a product page URL at search.google.com/test/rich-results. If price, availability, and product name are recognised, your theme schema may be sufficient. Only add a schema app or custom JSON-LD if fields are missing or invalid. <i>Why: Adding a schema app when your theme already outputs valid schema creates duplicate markup and can break the rich result entirely.</i>	HIGH
☐	Review / AggregateRating schema is in place if you have genuine product reviews → If you use Judge.me, Loox, or Yotpo, check whether it outputs review schema — varies by app and plan. Validate with Rich Results Test. If star ratings aren't detected, check app settings. <i>Why: Star ratings in the SERP are one of the biggest CTR uplifts available — without the schema, Google won't show them.</i>	HIGH
☐	Structured data validated using Google's Rich Results Test → Enter a product URL > check for errors or warnings. Fix any errors — missing required fields are the most common issue. <i>Why: Errors silently disqualify your page from rich results — Google won't email you about it.</i>	MED
☐	PageSpeed Insights has been reviewed to identify slow-page causes beyond images → Check for render-blocking third-party scripts (chat widgets, exit pop-ups, review carousels). Load these asynchronously or remove them from pages where they aren't needed. <i>Why: Once images are compressed, third-party scripts become the next-biggest LCP/INP drag — and they hide behind app names you trust.</i>	MED
☐	Your theme is a lean Shopify-built theme or a well-coded theme with strong speed scores → Test competitor stores in PageSpeed Insights for comparison. Shopify's own Dawn theme is a reliable baseline. <i>Why: Some premium themes ship with 80%+ unused CSS/JS — a theme swap can recover a full second of LCP with no other work.</i>	MED

Shopify-Specific Landmines

Shopify generates URLs, tags, filters, and search pages automatically — and some of those defaults actively hurt SEO. These are the traps to check for.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Products appearing under multiple collections aren't creating duplicate URLs → Shopify generates URLs like /collections/X/products/Y for products accessed via a collection. Check GSC > Indexing > Pages for the same product indexed under multiple paths. Fix by ensuring product links use canonical /products/Y URLs (most themes do this by default but custom themes often don't). <i>Why: Without a clean canonical, the same product gets indexed 3–5 times under different paths, splitting ranking signals between duplicates.</i>	HIGH
☐	Collection filter/sort parameter URLs are not generating large numbers of duplicate indexed URLs → If collections use parameters for filters (e.g. ?sort_by=price-ascending or filter.v.option.color=red), check GSC for hundreds of similar collection URLs being indexed. Add canonical tags pointing to the base collection URL, or block parameter URLs via robots.txt. <i>Why: Faceted navigation can create thousands of low-value URL variants — they dilute crawl budget and can suppress rankings for your main collection pages.</i>	HIGH
☐	Internal search results pages are not being indexed → Check GSC > Indexing > Pages for URLs containing /search?q=. Shopify usually blocks these by default via robots.txt, but custom themes can override it. Confirm yourstore.com/robots.txt disallows /search. <i>Why: Indexed internal search pages create thin, low-value content at scale and can trigger broader quality issues across your domain.</i>	MED
☐	Tag pages are not bloating your indexed page count → Shopify auto-generates a page for every product tag (e.g. /collections/all/red, /collections/all/sale). Check if these are appearing in GSC > Indexing > Pages. If yes and they have no unique content, add canonical tags to the parent collection or noindex them via your theme's robots.txt.liquid file. <i>Why: Hundreds of indexed tag pages with near-identical content trigger Google's thin-content judgement, which can hurt the rest of your site's rankings.</i>	MED
☐	Out-of-stock products are not being silently deindexed without a redirect → If a product is permanently discontinued, 301 redirect it to the nearest equivalent or parent collection in Online Store > Navigation > URL Redirects. Don't delete without a redirect. For temporarily out-of-stock products, keep the page live and visible — Shopify doesn't auto-noindex them. <i>Why: Discontinued URLs with backlinks lose all their equity if deleted without a redirect — a 301 captures it for the replacement.</i>	MED
☐	Low-value pages are not being unnecessarily indexed → In GSC > Indexing > Pages, check for large volumes of indexed tag pages, filter/sort parameter URLs, internal search pages, duplicate collection variants, or out-of-stock product pages with no content. Important pages should be indexable; low-value variants should be canonicalised, noindexed, or removed from internal navigation. <i>Why: Crawl budget is finite — every junk URL Google crawls is one less crawl of your money pages.</i>	MED
☐	New and updated pages have been submitted for indexing via GSC URL Inspection → URL Inspection > paste the URL > 'Request Indexing'. Do this every time you publish a new page or make a significant change.	MED

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
	<i>Why: Don't wait for Google to find new pages — manual submission can cut time-to-indexed from weeks to hours.</i>	

International / Multi-Market

Skip this subsection if you sell to one country only. If you sell to multiple markets — or plan to — Shopify Markets is the foundation everything else builds on.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	If you sell to multiple countries, you have Shopify Markets configured (not just multiple currencies) → Shopify Admin > Settings > Markets. Set up each country/region as a Market. This unlocks localised pricing, language, and crucially, country-specific URLs Google can target. <i>Why: Without Markets configured, you're showing the same content to every country — losing both relevance and the ability to use hreflang properly.</i>	HIGH
☐	Hreflang tags are in place for each country/language version of your store → Shopify Markets automatically adds hreflang when you enable international domains or subfolders (e.g. /en-gb/, /en-us/). Verify by viewing source on a localised page and searching for 'hreflang'. If missing or incorrect, check Markets > Domains settings. <i>Why: Without hreflang, Google can't tell your UK and US versions apart and may show US visitors your UK store (or vice versa) — killing conversion.</i>	HIGH
☐	Each market has its own domain, subdomain, or subfolder — not just a currency switcher → Shopify Markets > Domains. Decide on country-specific subfolders (yourstore.com/en-gb/, /en-us/) or separate domains (.co.uk, .com). Subfolders are simplest; separate domains can rank stronger per country but require more setup. <i>Why: A single domain with a currency popup gives Google nothing to differentiate markets — country-specific URLs are what make hreflang work and let you build authority per region.</i>	MED
☐	Each country version is registered as a separate property in Google Search Console → GSC > Add Property. Add each subdomain or subfolder as its own URL prefix property (or one Domain property that covers all). Set the country targeting under Settings > International Targeting if using country-coded subfolders. <i>Why: Without country-specific GSC properties, you can't see which market your rankings, clicks, and crawl errors are coming from — making diagnostics impossible.</i>	MED
☐	Product titles, descriptions, and meta tags are translated/localised, not just price-converted → Use Shopify's Translate & Adapt app or a third-party app (Weglot, Langify) to translate key pages. At minimum, localise spelling (color/colour, math/math), units (oz/g, in/cm), and shipping/returns copy per market. <i>Why: Buyers in a market trust stores that read native to them — and US/UK spelling differences alone can shift keyword rankings significantly.</i>	MED
☐	Currency, shipping, and tax messaging is clear on each market's product and checkout pages → Shopify Markets handles currency automatically. Add a clear shipping/returns block to product pages stating delivery times and costs to that market. Confirm tax-inclusive pricing for UK/EU and tax-exclusive for US. <i>Why: Cart abandonment spikes when international buyers hit unexpected costs at checkout — surfacing them upfront is both UX and a trust/E-E-A-T signal.</i>	LOW

5 Content & Authority (E-E-A-T)

Google's algorithm rewards stores that demonstrate genuine Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness. For e-commerce this means being visibly credible, specific, and real.

Trust Signals

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Your store has a detailed About Us page with founder story, real photos, and why you started → Write it as a human would speak — who you are, why you started, what makes you qualified. Add real photos of yourself or your team. Generic 'we are passionate about quality' copy doesn't build trust. <i>Why: E-E-A-T is now an explicit Google quality signal — a real, identifiable human behind the business raises trust scores in both algorithm and customer eyes.</i>	HIGH
☐	Returns, shipping, and privacy policies are easy to find — linked in the footer → Settings > Policies — generate policy templates and edit to match your terms. Link in footer. Missing or vague policies are a trust red flag for both Google and customers. <i>Why: Quality raters explicitly check for these — and customers often abandon checkout when they can't find a returns policy.</i>	HIGH
☐	Verified customer reviews are displayed on product pages → Install a reviews app (Judge.me has a free plan, Loox is popular for photo reviews). Send post-purchase review request emails. Genuine, verified reviews are one of the clearest E-E-A-T signals for e-commerce. <i>Why: Reviews lift both organic CTR (via star rating snippets) and on-page conversion — one of the few things that compounds across both funnels.</i>	HIGH
☐	Contact details (email, or contact form) are clearly visible → Add to your footer and a dedicated Contact page. An identifiable business builds confidence for both customers and Google. <i>Why: Hidden contact info is a trust red flag — quality raters check for this and customers infer scam if they can't find a way to reach you.</i>	MED
☐	Product pages use original photography rather than relying only on supplier or stock images → Original photos build trust and give you unique visual assets competitors can't replicate. Even phone photography with good natural lighting outperforms stock. Show the product in use. <i>Why: Stock images are reverse-image-searched by Google as duplicates — original photography is one of the few unique signals you fully control.</i>	MED

Content Strategy — Long-Term Visibility

Note: Content / blogging is a medium-to-long-term play. Get your Foundation, On-Page, and Technical items right first. Once those are in order, a consistent content strategy is the highest-leverage thing you can do to compound organic traffic over 6–12 months.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	You have a blog or content hub with at least a few posts relevant to your product category → Shopify: Online Store > Blog Posts > Add blog post. Start with 2–3 posts targeting informational keywords your buyers search before they're ready to buy. Publish consistently — even monthly beats nothing.	MED

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
	<i>Why: A blog gives Google ongoing reasons to crawl your site and broadens the set of queries you can rank for beyond product pages.</i>	
☐	Your blog content is organised around topic clusters: one pillar page per main topic, supported by related posts → Pick your most important product category. Write one long, comprehensive guide (1,500+ words). Then 3–5 shorter posts on sub-topics, each linking back to the pillar. Tackle once your product and collection pages are solid. <i>Why: Topic clusters signal topical depth to Google — being known for a niche outranks being shallow across many.</i>	LOW
☐	Every blog post has at least one internal link to a relevant product or collection page → Add a contextual link or 'Shop the range' CTA within the body of each post. <i>Why: Without this, informational traffic stays informational — internal links are how blog traffic becomes revenue.</i>	MED
☐	You are publishing original content based on first-hand experience, not generic category articles → Generic 'what is X' posts compete with thousands of identical articles. Your advantage is first-hand knowledge. Write about what you've actually seen, tested, or learned running your business. <i>Why: Google's Helpful Content system explicitly rewards first-hand experience — and original posts attract links generic ones never will.</i>	LOW
☐	Author name or credentials are included on blog posts → Add your name (and optionally a one-line bio) to each blog post author field in Shopify. For niche or specialist content, this contributes to E-E-A-T signals. <i>Why: Anonymous content scores worse under E-E-A-T — a real author with topical expertise is a measurable quality signal.</i>	LOW

Visibility Beyond Google (platform-native search)

This covers how buyers discover products via in-platform search on TikTok, Pinterest, Amazon, and YouTube — separate from how your products appear in Google Shopping feeds covered above.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Content captions and video titles on TikTok/YouTube include the words buyers actually type on those platforms → Search your product type on TikTok and YouTube and note how top results are worded. Buyers on TikTok often search 'XYZ that actually works' or 'best XYZ under £30' — different from Google. Optimise captions and titles for how people actually search on each platform. <i>Why: Each platform's search engine has its own ranking signals — copy-pasting Google-optimised titles into TikTok wastes the surface area.</i>	LOW
☐	You are creating content on the platforms where your buyers discover products → TikTok, YouTube, and Pinterest can increase brand search volume, drive referral traffic, and generate backlinks — all of which indirectly support Google rankings. Start with the one platform where your buyers already spend time. <i>Why: Branded search is the cleanest signal of brand authority Google sees — platform content compounds your branded search volume over time.</i>	LOW

6 Link Building

One link from a credible, relevant site is worth more than 50 from irrelevant directories. Focus on quality and relevance. These are medium-to-long-term tactics — do not skip the Foundation and On-Page sections first. Important: only start actively pursuing links once your key product and collection pages are good enough to convert the traffic you send to them.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	You have searched for unlinked brand mentions and requested links → Set up a Google Alert for your brand name. When you find a mention without a link, email the author: 'Thanks for the mention — would you be able to add a link to [your URL]?' Most say yes. Also do a one-time historical search using Ahrefs Alerts. <i>Why: Unlinked mentions are the highest-conversion link request you can send — the writer already chose to talk about you.</i>	MED
☐	You have reached out to relevant bloggers or journalists about featuring your products → Search 'best [your category]' and 'top [your product] UK/US'. Contact the authors of the top results and offer a free sample for an honest review. Keep outreach short, personal, focused on why their audience cares. <i>Why: A single link from a ranking 'best of' article can be worth more than 50 generic directory links — they're the pages buyers actually read.</i>	MED
☐	You have set up Google Alerts for your brand name and main product keywords → google.com/alerts > enter brand name > 'As it happens' delivery. Repeat for main product terms. Takes two minutes. <i>Why: Catches link and PR opportunities the moment they happen — most go cold within days.</i>	MED
☐	You have checked what sites link to your main competitors → In Ahrefs' free backlink checker, enter a competitor's URL and review top backlinks. For each linking site, ask: could I get a link here too? Guest post, product review, resource page — use whatever angle fits. <i>Why: Competitor backlinks are pre-qualified — the linking sites have already shown they'll link to a store in your category.</i>	MED
☐	You have registered on journalist source request platforms to earn media links → Sign up to Featured.com (relaunched HARO), Qwoted, or Help a B2B Writer. Respond to queries where you have genuine expertise — successful responses typically earn a backlink from a news or media site. <i>Why: Media links carry significantly more authority than guest posts or directories — and journalists actively need experts to quote.</i>	LOW
☐	You have identified at least one guest posting opportunity in your niche → Search: '[your keyword]' 'write for us'. Or '[your keyword]' 'submit guest post'. Find sites that publish content relevant to your audience and pitch an article idea. <i>Why: One contextual link from a relevant niche site is worth dozens of unrelated ones — relevance multiplies link value.</i>	LOW
☐	You have identified relevant podcasts in your niche and pitched yourself as a guest → Search your category on Spotify or Chartable. Listen to 2–3 episodes, then email the host with a concise pitch. Show notes almost always include a guest's link. <i>Why: Podcast guesting gives you a permanent link from a relevant show plus a direct audience for your brand — compounding both SEO and demand.</i>	LOW

7 Tracking & Visibility Tools

Set up tracking before you start optimising. Without baseline data, you cannot tell what is working.

Non-Negotiable (Free)

Tool	What it tracks / does	Cost
Google Search Console search.google.com/search-console	Tracks keywords you rank for, click-through rates, indexing status, Core Web Vitals, and crawl errors. The first place to look when rankings change. Submit your sitemap and request indexing of new pages here.	Free
Google Analytics 4 analytics.google.com	Tracks all traffic sources, user behaviour, and conversions. Shows which pages drive the most organic traffic and which lead to purchases. Connect to GSC for combined keyword + behaviour data.	Free
PageSpeed Insights pagespeed.web.dev	Tests Core Web Vitals (LCP, CLS, INP) and gives specific fix recommendations. Run your homepage, a product page, and a collection page. Always check the Mobile tab — Google ranks on mobile performance.	Free
Google Rich Results Test search.google.com/test/rich-results	Validates your product schema and structured data. Confirms whether your pages are eligible for rich results (star ratings, price, availability) in Google SERPs.	Free
Google Merchant Center merchants.google.com	Connects your product catalogue to Google Shopping and enables free product listings in Google Search. Essential for any Shopify store — setup takes under an hour using the Google & YouTube Shopify app.	Free
Google Keyword Planner ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner	Keyword research tool. Shows search volume, seasonality, competition level, and related keyword ideas. Free with any Google account.	Free

Free Tier Available — Useful for Deeper Audits

Tool	What it tracks / does	Cost
Ahrefs Free Tools ahrefs.com/seo-tools	Standalone free tools — no account needed. Keyword generator (volumes on Google, Bing, YouTube, Amazon), backlink checker (top 100 linking sites), keyword rank checker, broken link checker.	Free
Screaming Frog SEO Spider www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider	Crawls your entire site (free up to 500 URLs). Finds broken links, missing title tags, duplicate content, missing alt text, and redirect chains in one pass. Run this quarterly.	Freemium
SEO Review Tools www.seoreviewtools.com	67+ individual free SEO tools — keyword research, backlink analysis, Core Web Vitals testing, SERP analysis, technical checks. No account needed. Good for one-off checks.	Free
Google Alerts www.google.com/alerts	Sends email notifications when your brand name or product keywords are mentioned online. Use it to catch unlinked brand mentions and monitor PR opportunities. Takes two minutes to set up.	Free
Microsoft Clarity clarity.microsoft.com	Free heatmaps and session recordings. Shows exactly how users navigate your pages — where they click, where they scroll, where they leave. Useful for identifying UX issues that hurt engagement and bounce rate.	Free

Tool	What it tracks / does	Cost
Check My Links (Chrome Extension) chromewebstore.google.com	Highlights all links on a page as green (working) or red (broken) in seconds. Fast way to audit internal and external links on any individual page.	Free

Paid — Worth It Once You Are Scaling

Tool	What it tracks / does	Cost
Ahrefs (paid) ahrefs.com	Full SEO toolkit. Keyword research, rank tracking, site audits, backlink analysis, content gap analysis, competitor research. The most widely used tool among serious Shopify SEOs. Starts at \$29/month (Starter plan).	Paid
Semrush www.semrush.com	Comparable to Ahrefs with strong keyword research, content gap analysis, and PPC competitor data. Often preferred for its keyword database breadth. Also includes a site audit tool.	Paid
Schema Plus for SEO apps. shopify.com	Shopify app for adding and managing structured data — product schema, review schema, breadcrumbs, organisation. Fills gaps in Shopify's native schema output without needing to touch code.	Paid
Judge.me / Loox apps. shopify.com	Review collection apps for Shopify. Judge.me has a free plan and can support review schema depending on setup — check the app settings and validate with Rich Results Test. Loox focuses on photo reviews. Schema output varies by plan and configuration.	Freemium

Review Cadence — What to Check and When

Frequency	What to check
Weekly	GSC > Performance: check for drops in impressions or clicks. GSC > Indexing > Pages: check for new errors. Request indexing of any new or updated pages via URL Inspection.
Monthly	GSC > Core Web Vitals report. Rank tracking for your top 20 target keywords (Ahrefs or Semrush). Review new/lost backlinks. Check Merchant Center for product feed disapprovals.
Quarterly	Full site crawl with Screaming Frog. Audit title tags and meta descriptions across all key pages. Keyword gap analysis vs. competitors. Content audit — update any posts over 12 months old with fresh information.
After every significant change	Submit affected URLs in GSC > URL Inspection > Request Indexing. Run PageSpeed Insights on affected pages. Re-validate schema with Rich Results Test if product data changed.

8 Conversion Sanity Check — Before Chasing More Traffic

SEO traffic that doesn't convert is wasted at any margin. This section isn't an SEO list — it's a conversion gut check. If you're already getting visits but not sales, the highest-ROI work is usually here, not in chasing more rankings. Founders new to a store: do this section first. Founders with steady traffic: re-do it every quarter.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Your product pages load fast enough that buyers don't leave before they see the buy button → Run pagespeed.web.dev on a key product page on Mobile. If LCP is over 3 seconds, fix that before chasing more traffic — the SEO checklist above covers how. <i>Why: Every extra second of mobile load time drops conversion by 5–20% — at small-store scale, fixing speed is the highest-ROI work you can do.</i>	HIGH
☐	Above-the-fold on a product page clearly shows: what it is, price, primary CTA, and one trust signal → Open your top product page on a real phone. Without scrolling, can a buyer answer: what is this, what does it cost, how do I buy, and why should I trust this store? If any answer is missing or unclear, restructure the template. <i>Why: Most mobile buyers decide whether to keep scrolling within 3 seconds of landing — if the first screen doesn't earn the scroll, no SEO investment will pay back.</i>	HIGH
☐	Reviews and star ratings are visible above the fold or immediately on scroll → Move your reviews app's star rating display directly under the product title. Show review count too — 47 reviews builds more trust than a 4.9 average alone. Use Judge.me or Loox snippets in the theme editor. <i>Why: Social proof is the single biggest trust lever on a product page — burying it below the fold means most mobile buyers never see it.</i>	HIGH
☐	Mobile checkout has been completed end-to-end on a real phone within the last 90 days → Buy one of your own products on your phone, all the way through to confirmation. Note every point of friction: too many fields, unclear shipping cost, missing payment options. Fix the top 2. <i>Why: Most checkout friction is invisible from the admin side and only shows up when you actually buy something — and mobile is where 60–75% of revenue is won or lost.</i>	HIGH
☐	Each page has one clear primary CTA, not five competing ones → Audit your product page. Count the buttons above the fold. If there's an Add to Cart, a Buy with PayPal, a Buy with Shop Pay, a Wishlist, and a Subscribe, you have five CTAs. Keep one primary; demote or remove the rest on mobile. <i>Why: Choice paralysis is real — adding more CTAs almost always lowers conversion on the primary one. Less is more on mobile.</i>	MED
☐	Microsoft Clarity is installed and you have watched at least 10 session recordings in the last 30 days → clarity.microsoft.com — install via Google Tag Manager or the Shopify integration. Then actually watch sessions: filter for users who reached a product page but didn't buy. Note where they get stuck. <i>Why: Heatmaps and recordings reveal CRO problems no analytics dashboard can — 30 minutes of session viewing usually surfaces 2–3 fixable issues you didn't know existed.</i>	MED
☐	Shipping cost and delivery time are visible on the product page — not first revealed at checkout → Add a small block under the Add to Cart button: 'Free UK delivery over £50 2–3 working days'. For international, surface the relevant market's terms (see international subsection). <i>Why: Unexpected shipping costs are the #1 cause of cart abandonment globally — surfacing them up-front lifts conversion and reduces wasted PPC spend.</i>	MED
☐	Your exit pop-up, chat widget, or sticky banner is not blocking the buy button on mobile	MED

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
	→ Open each key product page on a phone. If a widget covers content or the CTA, change its settings or remove it on mobile. Many apps allow desktop-only display. <i>Why: Pop-ups that cover the CTA actively destroy conversion — and they're a quiet third-party-script CWV hit on top.</i>	

Per-Page Audit Checklist

Use this when auditing or optimising an individual product page, collection page, or blog post.

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Page has a clear primary keyword assigned (not shared with another page) → Check your keyword spreadsheet. If this page doesn't have one, assign one before optimising anything else. <i>Why: No keyword = no anchor for any of the on-page work — start here or everything else drifts.</i>	HIGH
☐	Primary keyword is in the URL → Edit in Shopify > Search engine listing > URL. Only change if the page is new or has no existing rankings. <i>Why: Keyword in URL is a small but consistent ranking signal — only worth pursuing on new pages.</i>	MED
☐	Primary keyword is in the H1 tag → On product pages this is the product title. On collection pages it's the collection title. Edit directly in Shopify. <i>Why: H1 is the second-strongest on-page signal after the title tag — alignment between them reinforces ranking.</i>	MED
☐	Primary keyword appears in the title tag within the first 50 characters → Edit in Shopify > Search engine listing > Page title. <i>Why: Keyword-early titles win the most clicks and survive Google rewriting most often.</i>	HIGH
☐	Title tag is under 55–60 characters → Count characters in the 'Search engine listing' field. Trim if needed — keep the keyword, cut the filler. <i>Why: Titles longer than ~60 chars get truncated in the SERP — the part that drove the click gets cut off.</i>	MED
☐	Meta description is under 155 characters and reads as compelling ad copy → Write what makes this page worth clicking. Include the keyword naturally. <i>Why: Meta description doesn't rank — but a click-worthy one lifts CTR, which Google rewards over time.</i>	MED
☐	Content is original — not copied from supplier or another page on your site → Google search a sentence from the description in quotes. If it appears elsewhere, rewrite it. <i>Why: Duplicate content gets filtered out of the SERP — original is the minimum bar.</i>	HIGH
☐	Primary keyword appears naturally in the first paragraph or intro → Read it back. If it sounds forced, rewrite the opening so it flows. <i>Why: Early keyword placement confirms topical match — but only if it reads naturally; stuffing hurts more than it helps.</i>	MED

✓	Action → Next step if not done Why it matters	Priority
☐	Content covers the topic fully — related questions and sub-topics are addressed → Check Google's People Also Ask for your keyword and make sure your page answers at least 2–3 of them. <i>Why: Depth beats density — pages that fully answer a query rank above those that partially do.</i>	MED
☐	All images have descriptive alt text → Shopify: Products > click each image > edit alt text. <i>Why: Alt text powers Google Images rankings and screen readers — both bring traffic you'd otherwise miss.</i>	HIGH
☐	Images are compressed and under 200KB where possible → Run through TinyPNG or Squoosh before uploading. <i>Why: Large images are the #1 cause of slow Shopify stores and the most fixable.</i>	HIGH
☐	At least one internal link with descriptive anchor text to a related page → Add in the product/collection description editor. Use 'see our full wallet range' not 'click here'. <i>Why: Internal links pass authority and tell Google what the linked page is about — descriptive anchors double the value.</i>	MED
☐	No broken links on this page → Run Check My Links Chrome extension. Fix or remove any red links. <i>Why: Broken links waste link equity and frustrate buyers — both compound at scale.</i>	HIGH
☐	Product schema is validated (product pages only) → Test at search.google.com/test/rich-results — confirm price, availability, and reviews are detected. <i>Why: Without valid schema, your page misses out on rich result eligibility — the visible difference in the SERP.</i>	HIGH
☐	Page is confirmed indexed in GSC > URL Inspection → Paste the URL into GSC URL Inspection. If not indexed, click Request Indexing. <i>Why: Unindexed pages can't rank — and Google sometimes silently drops good pages without telling you.</i>	HIGH
☐	Page passes Core Web Vitals in PageSpeed Insights → Run pagespeed.web.dev on this specific URL. Fix the top 1–2 recommendations if it fails. <i>Why: CWV is a confirmed tiebreaker — failing it caps your ceiling even with strong content.</i>	MED