

NielsenIQ
Brandbank

Brands face missed
**opportunities with
product discoverability
everyday**

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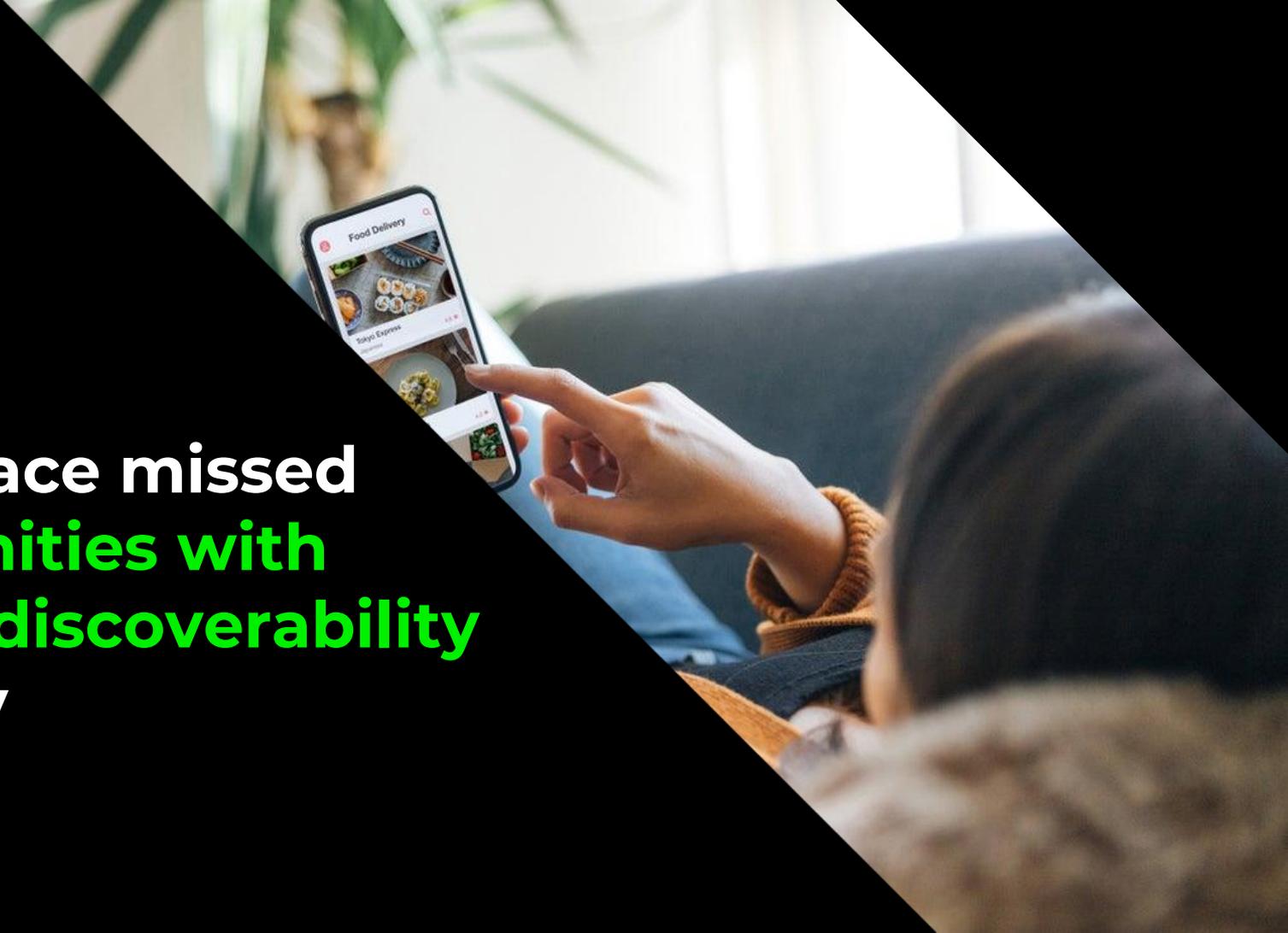




Table of contents

Introduction	3	Why future planning is just as important as the now	13
3 winning SEO opportunities that many brands are failing to spot	6	In practice: How SEO changes can upgrade PDP pages	15
SEO key facts	8	What shoppers want today	16
Thinking beyond the product launch	9	How data helps you improve discoverability	17
New products and why it's important to stand out from the crowd	10	How can brands think more long term?	18
Getting to grips with Google	12	Key considerations	20



Introduction

Grocery e-commerce is booming. Forced online by the pandemic, shoppers migrated rapidly to digital purchasing—and retailers have reacted at pace to adjust their virtual stores and operations to meet the new demand.

This shift to online shopping looks set to stay and has dramatically reordered the competitive FMCG landscape.

Brand loyalty is evaporating, and search engines now offer up an exciting array of products and opportunities for the new breed of click-happy shoppers. Meanwhile, the number of purchasing channels and grocery e-commerce options is multiplying at a dizzying rate.

Meanwhile, the post-pandemic shopper's needs are shifting as they prioritise health, wellbeing and environmental concerns and try to manage newly constrained budgets against a backdrop of geopolitical and economic uncertainty.

Shopper allegiance to brands they may have stuck with for years is ebbing away as they become adept at searching for what they need online and finding products that meet their new post-pandemic needs at the click of a mouse.

Faced with this crowded digital FMCG landscape, brands may wonder how they can stand out against so many competitors. Most are unsure how they can increase discoverability when there are so many products vying for the top spot in the rankings.

Many brands opt for a quick and short-term approach and overlook marketing activities such as Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) when they launch products or add content to product detail pages. As a result, this creates a space for huge and exciting opportunities for brands that decide to adopt a long-term strategy for discoverability and put effort into their SEO.

This report considers why it's imperative to ensure your products are discoverable online—and considers what brands themselves can do to make their FMCG more visible to today's digital shopper.

The best brands understand how and why they need to put effort into search engine optimisation techniques (SEO) on their product pages and how they can harness these to supercharge their visibility.

"In the current digital landscape, it is vital that products are discoverable online—if not brands are missing opportunities to sell. If a product isn't as optimized as possible you are simply not reaching as many shoppers as you could be."



Kathryn Taylor

PXM Product Leader

NielsenIQ Brandbank

"Retailers and brands are missing out opportunities to be discovered every day. They are missing out on millions of pounds of sales because they aren't as visible as they could be digitally. Consumer behavior has changed—don't get left behind. SEO is all about optimizing for today's shopper."



Matt Mezey

Senior SEO Strategist

 **Fountain**



Introduction

Grocery e-commerce may be thriving, but many brands could still be missing out on sales because their products are not discoverable to shoppers. Unfortunately, many fail to realize that visibility on search engines isn't a given.

Many retailers and brands are failing to spot the potential for SEO and as a result are missing out on millions of pounds and a chance to surge ahead of the competition online. Some basic SEO techniques can help retailers and brands make a big difference to their bottom line.

A competitive gap has opened for brands and retailers that are willing to optimize product details and employ SEO techniques built around data collection. And there's an added benefit to increased brand visibility—it can prompt shoppers to ignore brand loyalty and switch to the highest-ranking product that they keep seeing thanks to good SEO.

The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation and shopper behaviour has changed forever.

It's crucial that brands futureproof themselves and provide the best digital experience for their customers. SEO is a major part of achieving this.

One fifth of UK shoppers now start their online shopping journey with a search engine query

PDPs which rank number one on Google will receive an average click through rate of **31.7%**

75.1% of all clicks happen between positions one and three on a Google search result

5.6 billion this is the approximate number of daily searches on Google.

3 winning SEO opportunities that many brands are failing to spot

1. Product Detail Page (PDP)

PDP pages often appear homogenous across retailers and offer little more than basic product detail. Even though they attract a vast amount of traffic and may be the clinching factor when a shopper is considering whether to 'add to basket' they are often overlooked for optimization. This means they can yield huge wins for brands wanting to increase visibility and willing to invest in enhanced content.

Some straightforward SEO changes to enhance the quality of the PDP main content can supercharge the shopper experience, provide the answers they are looking for and ultimately boost product visibility and sales.

Many shoppers land on PDPs straight from Google so there is a huge opportunity to SEO optimize these pages so that a greater number of people land on them.

In addition, if people are searching and landing on these pages, it is likely that they are looking to buy rather than find out more information—so optimisation should focus on this.



"A lot of PDP pages are repetitive and don't resonate with shoppers as much as they could. So, there is huge SEO opportunity for brands that can understand shopper intent and create unique and genuinely helpful content for them on a PDP. Within the grocery sector SEO is often disregarded. Brands have products and they write content for them – but it is minimal and there is little optimization that goes into formulating this content. A little optimization will probably go a long way. There is huge potential here. Around 12.9 million visitors go to grocery product pages each month with around 60% of people clicking on the products in the top three of a Google search. If you can move up the rankings, you are going to obtain a huge amount of new shoppers. it's a massive opportunity and something that is very much overlooked at the moment."

Matt Meazey

Senior SEO Strategist



3 winning SEO opportunities that many brands are failing to spot

2. New product launches

These provide a great opportunity for brands to optimise their products from the get-go.

Optimizing page content can help in the short term by enhancing an in-store and digital launch campaign—bringing a new product to shopper’s attention and encouraging them to try it.

Beyond this, they can also be built into the long-term management of a product’s visibility, ensuring it brings a return on investment and continues to sell past launch date.

3. Optimising for Google

Retailers have built search algorithms leveraging Google’s best practice as a core component.

Therefore, optimizing for Google will mean you are optimized for retailers, without retailer-specific optimization. Optimizing for Google will boost your ranking on this influential search engine, but it will also automatically increase your retailer internal search ranking too.

Brands should avoid optimising purely for search engines, however. The overall focus should be on achieving the best possible user experience, ticking the boxes here. This, in turn, will have a hugely positive effect on search rankings—the search engines algorithms react well to content that is optimized for users and provides them with great information.

SEO key facts

Q: What is SEO?

A: Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is the process of improving a website with non-paid techniques, such as enhancing product pages and enriched content, so it is more visible organically. With more visibility comes more exposure to your brand and more sales.

Q: What are search engines and how do they work?

A: They can be external like Google or internal on a retailer's own website. It helps to think of them as digital answer-providing machines. Shoppers put in questions (what's the healthiest ready meal, where can I buy dog food near me?) and the search engines show the sites or pages that provide the best answer. They are all powered by algorithms that consider more than 200 ranking factors and change daily as the search engines learn.

Q: Why should brands make optimizing for search engines a priority?

A: Optimizing for search engines such as Google is the gold-standard starting point for SEO which will, in turn, help boost visibility elsewhere. Never optimize purely for search engines. Instead, focus on providing shoppers with the best possible user experience via great content. Search engine rankings will improve as a result of this.

Q: Why should brands invest in SEO?

A: If your product isn't visible, shoppers can't buy it—and you are missing sales opportunities at every click. Ranking higher on search engines will increase traffic to product detail pages. A good on-site user experience will accelerate basket conversion and increase brand loyalty. SEO is a cost-effective and measurable tactic for increasing visibility and sales across the digital shelf.

Thinking beyond the product launch

New product launches typically tread a familiar path. In store there are aisle displays, promotions and marketing images to catch attention. There is usually a marketing campaign with online ads and paid-for TV, radio, and magazine coverage.

Traditional launch marketing strategies like in-store signage and digital banner ads will create impact and grab shoppers' attention short term. However, the buzz around a launch can prove short-lived.

Instead, it's strategic SEO techniques that will help a newly-launched brand stand out in the long term. It can help brands find shoppers online—where they are already searching with intent for product they need and want.

A longer-term approach with a focus on enhanced content and SEO can...

- **Create a repeat purchase shopper.** It can be hard to get initial visibility with a repeat purchase shopper who shops in the same way each week, often from previous orders, and without necessarily even browsing the aisles. SEO can help a new item become visible to this type of shopper and then become part of their weekly purchase routine.
- **Attract new shoppers.** Create engaging new, experiential content to influence and persuade new shoppers and help them discover your product. You can't buy what you can't see and find in the digital aisles.
- **Deal with diminishing shopper loyalty.** The new digital landscape has seen shopper loyalty diminish as purchasing options and channels increase and people grow used to moving between websites to find what they need. A longer-term approach can help brands obtain and retain traffic.
- **Optimise conversion rate.** SEO tactics that promote engaging content means that product pages will resonate with potential shoppers, which is key to driving conversions.
- **Help smaller brands rank organically against big-name brands.** Sometimes big brands will rank high automatically just because of their household name - but this doesn't mean it's not worth smaller, new-launch brands working on SEO. When a mega-brand launches a new product, it is likely to rank high in Google quickly. But don't give up, the opportunity is still huge. Make your product pages more engaging and enhanced than the leading brand and you stand a good chance of outranking them.
- **Help brands meet shoppers' needs.** SEO allows brands to target shoppers based on what they are searching for and enhanced content that encourages them to complete the path to purchase.



New products and why it's important to stand out from the crowd

Thousands of products are launched each year—often with a blaze of short-term launch marketing collateral. Many thousands more are relaunched with new formulations or packaging. Few stay in the aisles for the long haul so SEO is crucial to stay ahead of this vast amount of competition.

In 2021, the UK grocery market saw:

20,004

brand new product launches

52,966

revised products

72,9971

grand total of new products

There are two ways to search and shop for groceries

Retailer Internal Search

The screenshot shows the Tesco website's search results for "oat milk". The search bar at the top contains "oat milk" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for "Groceries", "My Favourites", "Recipes", "Special Offers", "Inspiration", and "Delivery Saver". The main heading is "Results for 'oat milk'", followed by "Showing 1 to 26 of 38 items | Show 48 per page". There are filter options for "Filter by:" (New (6), Special Offers (10)) and "Sort by:" (Relevance). Below these are dropdown menus for "5 Categories", "13 Brands", and "Lifestyle & Dietary". The results are displayed in a grid of four sponsored products, each with an image, name, price, and an "Add" button. The first product is "Mighty Barista M.Lk Uht Drink 1 Litre" for £2.00. The second is "Mighty Pea Protein Oat M.lk Milk Alternative 1 Litre" for £2.00. The third is "Oatly Oat Drink Whole 1 Litre" for £1.90. The fourth is "Oatly Oat Drink Barista Edition 1 Litre" for £1.90. A "Clubcard Price" badge is visible on the first product, indicating a discount from £1.25 to £1.25.

Search Engine - Google

The screenshot shows Google search results for "oat milk". The search bar at the top contains "oat milk" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for "All", "Shopping", "Images", "News", "Videos", and "More". The main heading is "About 122,000,000 results (0.61 seconds)". Below this is a section titled "Ads · Shop oat milk" with a vertical ellipsis icon. The results are displayed in a grid of five sponsored products, each with an image, name, price, and an "Add" button. The first product is "Oatly! Oat Drink" for £1.65. The second is "Mighty Barista Oat Milk Blend..." for £2.99. The third is "Alpro Oat Long Life Drink 1L" for £1.80. The fourth is "Minor Figures Oat Milk 6 x 1..." for £8.99. The fifth is "Oat Milk 6 Pack | Mighty Pea |..." for £2.99. Each product has a star rating and a "By" label.

Getting to grips with Google

The importance of external search for FMCG and how it works

Google search results for "meat-free ready meals". The search bar shows the query and the Google logo. Below the search bar, there are navigation options: All, Shopping, News, Images, Maps, and More. The search results show "About 131,000,000 results (0.67 seconds)".

Ads · Shop meat-free ready meals

Product	Price	Retailer
Plant-based Quick recipe box	£12.45	Riverford Organ..
Aunt Bessie's Meat Free Toa...	£1.85	sainsburys.co.uk
Plantlife: Tikka Masala with...	£3.75	Waitrose & Part..
Mega-Kit	£38.99	Greenforce UK
Sainsbury's Love Your Veg...	£2.75	sainsburys.co.uk

Below the ads, there are organic search results for Tesco and ASDA. The Tesco result is for "Vegetarian - Ready Meals - Tesco Groceries" and the ASDA result is for "Vegetarian & Vegan Ready Meals - ASDA Groceries".

Shoppers often start their online purchasing journey by using an external search engine, like Google, to find the product they are interested in.

From this initial Google search shoppers usually find their way to a retailer's site where they make a purchase—or even fill up their weekly shopping trolley.

Shoppers usually search Google with intent. They have a question in mind, for example 'I want to buy a meat-free ready meal.'

Every time you search there are thousands, sometimes millions, of web pages or other content that might be a match. Google uses its robust systems to present the most helpful information in response to your query.

Ads show at the top, followed by the organic search rankings.

The more helpful Google judges your product content to be and the better it is optimized for the search engine, the higher it will appear in these organic rankings.

Optimising for Google best practices will positively impact your retailer internal search ranking.

Why future planning is just as important as the now

The shopper journey and product description pages

The omnichannel shopping landscape has created many varied paths to purchase.

Shoppers can begin their digital journey on the retailer's e-commerce 'shop front.' They may be influenced by display ads and persuasive content as they search categories - or they may shop from favorites and repeat purchases.

Different occasions and weather can also have an influence, as they search say for BBQ ingredients for a Summer party or food for a healthy lunchbox. Some shoppers may plan ahead and some purchase in a hurry. Whilst others want to spend time browsing the digital aisles and discovering new items that fit their needs.

Meanwhile, changing needs can also direct the shopper, as they seek out products that fulfil the increasingly important health and wellbeing needs or search for items that are sustainable or ethical.

Increasingly, journeys are more complex with shoppers researching FMCG online, often via Google search, before heading in-store. Or they may click straight through into one of their search results, usually one of the top three ranking sites – ideally on to a grocery retailer website.

Each shopper's journey to purchase is unique and highly personalised. It's crucial to understand the kinds of messages that might impact decision making as a shopper negotiates your product pages.

Product pages need to be as impactful as possible, containing rich content and powerful messages that will convert a shopper. Optimize product descriptions for target keywords.

Why future planning is just as important as the now

Product description pages—why you need to stand out from the crowd

Product description pages are often overlooked and by default are the same on every retailer site. Brands have a huge opportunity to use enhanced content to help them stand out and create a unique voice that will chime with shoppers.

Shoppers form an emotional connection and buy into brands with a unique voice that chimes with them.

Create retailer-specific enhanced content rather than use homogenous product description pages. Match the retailer's tone of voice which will have been well-researched and proven effective. The brand tone you might use on Asda is likely to be different to Waitrose. Optimize the content to fit the correct tone for different shopper demographics.

The UK top six grocery retailers have

12.9 million visitors

head to PDP pages every month



"It's crucial to make sure that the representation and discoverability of a brand's product goes across all of the different shopper needs and the different paths to purchase."

Kathryn Taylor

PXM Product Leader

NielsenIQ Brandbank

In practice: How SEO changes can upgrade PDP pages

Here is a practical example of how simple, data-driven changes can supercharge current content and increase product visibility. The new message is more emotionally appealing and better speaks to the needs of a shopper looking for a low-calorie squash that is still packed with flavour. The changes are subtle but impactful and will improve discoverability because search engines and users alike can better understand the content.

Current	Concentrated Low Calorie Whole Orange Soft Drink with Sweeteners. A great tasting and hydrating squash drink made with real fruit juices and absolutely no added sugar. A tasty and easy way to enjoy drinking more water, perfect for the whole family.
New	Low calorie orange squash that's packed with real fruit juices. A delicious orange squash from Robinsons, crafted with real fruit juices for that authentic taste while remaining low in calories. With no added sugars , Robinsons orange squash is a great way to keep the whole family healthy and hydrated.



What shoppers want today

Shoppers' needs are changing fast as they adapt to a post-pandemic world and concerns about inflation, geopolitics, and the environment drives shopper buying decisions.

Shoppers want products based on their personalized needs and lifestyle with health, wellness, sustainability, and managing on a newly-constrained budget now high on the agenda.

Today's shopper wants to take charge of their health as they adapt to life after COVID-19. They have a new awareness of the need to boost immunity, eat less salt, improve mental wellbeing, and reduce sugar intake.

There is a huge opportunity for brands that can deliver a shopper experience optimized for product discovery.

Brands and retailers that use SEO techniques to make specific product attributes, such as 'immune boosting' easy to identify and find in searches are likely to win out with today's shopper.

The opportunity is significant because 95% of consumer-packaged goods that qualify for the most frequently searched product attributes do not appear in search results.

SEO savvy brands can optimize their products to avoid dissatisfied, disengaged shoppers—and missed revenue.

Get your SEO right and make the right product discoverable at the right time and you can drive brand loyalty and increase repeat purchases.

How data helps you improve discoverability

A successful SEO strategy in the FMCG market will be built on data analysis. When a shopper searches on Google or a retailer website they will have a question in mind. They search with intent.

The 'keywords' are the words and phrases that shoppers enter into search engines to find what they are looking for.

For example, if you were looking to find an alternative to cow's milk, you might type something like "non-dairy milk" or even a longer phrase such as "?what can I drink instead of cow's milk?" These are all 'keywords', but the longer, more specific, phrases are sometimes also called 'long-tail keywords.'

"When it comes to SEO, I would recommend using data to drive everything you do. Enhanced content works best if it is driven by data. Finding out what shoppers are searching for—what they are wanting from that product—and then creating the content around this data. Essentially, creating content that should give the user exactly what they are looking for."

Matt Meazey

Senior SEO Strategist



Your SEO strategy will use data research to discover the best keywords for your product and ensure they are integral to any enhanced content solution. They will be built into your product description pages in a natural easy-to-read way, rather than listed for the sake of it. This will help your product be more discoverable in organic searches.

Beyond keyword research, segment and shopper data can also help optimize content. Common sense beliefs may prove wrong—for example many assumed that the over 65s would be the first to abandon online shopping habits taken up during the pandemic and head back to bricks and mortar stores.

However, a recent survey commissioned by NielsenIQ Brandbank revealed almost a third (32%) of over 55s reported purchasing more online and signalled their intent to continue to do so.

While all age groups say they will shop online post-pandemic, this may be at different times of the day.

The data revealed that older shoppers are also the most likely age group to buy online in the morning with 11% saying they made ecommerce purchases between 10am and midday. Younger shoppers aged 18-24 are the most likely to shop online between midnight and 6am.



How can brands think more long term?

It is vital that brands plan for the long term, rather than focussing on shorter goals such as product launch or a one-off marketing campaign.

Of course, there are always quick, tactical SEO wins that a brand can implement to boost the visibility of a product. But the most effective strategies look beyond the immediate gains and think far ahead.



"When it comes to competing on the digital shelf, it is a continuous journey. It's so important that brands continually implement optimisation changes and then monitor and measure the impact of these."

Kat Taylor

PXM Product Leader

NielsenIQ Brandbank

Retailers are in charge of their websites, but brands can influence their rankings within these sites by making sure they have the right information on the products details page.

Brands have control of their product pages and they can use these to maximize discoverability. Selecting the right keywords, and basing the content on data and research, will help them rank higher.

Indeed, it is up to brands to optimize their product pages—retailers won't do it for them. Not making improvements to content can lead to missed opportunities for improved ranking and sales.

Meanwhile, optimising for visibility on Google search will also help product rankings on retailers' own websites.

Brands can benefit from collaborating with retailers to make sure they are being ranked in the correct online categories. For example, brands selling a snack could check whether the retailer has a specific category for say 'lunchboxes' and then make sure they are included.

Optimisation changes are most effective when they are continually updated and driven by data. Monitoring the effect of changes and measuring their impact, using a key metric such as sales or dwell time on a page, will ensure shoppers are engaging with the content. This will enable brands to continually stay ahead of the competition and improve discoverability.

Creating content that satisfies shopper intent

A big part of SEO is all about creating unique, creative, and generally helpful content that actually matters to the shopper and helps them solve the problem they want to answer. It's not about loading up content with keywords or making it suitable for an online bot—it needs to satisfy a real, live human being.

Most existing product content does little more than provide basic information. It is often repetitive and unexciting—even on the product pages of household names! It fails to resonate with the audience and is uninspiring. Even most big brands could do better.

Tips for supercharging product content for SEO

- Include recipes. An enticing recipe could be the tipping point that prompts a shopper to buy your product over that of a competitor.
- Add FAQs. Adding these can reassure a shopper and show the product meets their needs. This can be driven by keyword research.
- Deliver an easy and comfortable read. Avoid pushing keywords too hard because this can make the content seem stilted. It needs to read naturally. Stuffing it uncomfortably full of keywords can have a negative impact on organic rankings and conversion rates.
- Provide bespoke content. The content of each PDP is frequently the same on every single online grocery store. Tweak it for each retailer or group of retailers.
- Make it enhanced. Enrich and enhance the content beyond the basic data. Make sure it resolves any questions or needs a shopper might have—and resolves them quickly and easily. Add video, enhanced images, and engaging content.



Key considerations

1.

Uncover the opportunities

The opportunities awaiting brands that take control of SEO are huge. Product pages are frequently bland and repetitive and the potential to supercharge them and climb up the rankings as a result is there for the taking—even up against household name brands. Identify the profile of your shopper at the retailer, brand, and product level and undertake analysis of competing products to understand what opportunities are available to drive visibility.

2.

Build the foundations

Create enriched and powerful content that resonates with the shopper and goes beyond your basic pack information. This can include videos, 360-degree photography, interactive product tours, feature sets, downloadable documents, and comparison tables. Give shoppers the information they need to feel confident about clicking add to cart, using enriched content to virtually put a product into shoppers' hands. Match your tone of voice to your individual retailers. Implement strategic recommendations based on analysis and data to support growth. Never assume. Always base your optimisation on data—this will ensure that the content is tailored as well.

3.

Optimize your product listings

Knowledge is power when it comes to SEO. Continually monitor and understand the quality and completeness of your product content online. Optimize your product page performance and measure with a content health score that reveals what is missing. You will reap the rewards.



NielsenIQ Brandbank

NielsenIQ Brandbank is the leading provider of digital product content solutions enabling more than 52,000+ brands and 700+ retailers and wholesalers across the globe in over 39 countries to deliver the best shopping experience by giving them the ability to capture and share rich digital product content on all channels seamlessly.

NielsenIQ Brandbank's end-to-end solutions connect shoppers to the most up to date and relevant digital product content making consumer goods more discoverable and engaging.

For more information please visit:
<https://nielseniq.com/global/en/landing-page/brandbank/>