

Search Engine Optimization on Marketplaces



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Search engine optimization, more commonly known as SEO, has been around since the late '90s and involves the management and cultivation of online content to improve its appearance in search results — particularly the natural search results on Google.

As an online marketplaces seller, there's another type of SEO that you need to be an expert in: SEO on marketplaces.

Leading marketplaces like eBay and Amazon have millions of product listings on their site and, for most products, selection is broad. While these sites are entertaining new programs like eBay's Promoted Listings and Amazon's Sponsored Products, which allow sellers to pay additional fees to give select products in their catalog more visibility, this strategy cannot feasibly be used to universally promote a retailer's entire catalog. That's where SEO comes into play because it delivers enriched product listings that don't come with additional marketplaces fees. So, it's imperative for successful retailers to know how to do SEO on marketplaces well.

SEO on Marketplaces:
Optimizing your product listings to appear higher in search results on a particular marketplace.



What should you optimize?

The best bang for your buck with SEO on marketplaces will come from these areas:

Title Optimization

Product titles are the most prominent aspect of a listing and also carry a hefty SEO weight. Universally on all marketplaces, this data point can make or break a product, so it's important to invest time in creating an appropriate and keyword-rich title. For eBay, use all the space that they give you (80 characters), but for other marketplaces, like Amazon, you might be better served by following their recommendations for shorter titles that conform to their guidelines.



SEO TIP:
Your product data should meet this SEO criteria:

- ✓ Relevant
- ✓ Keyword-Rich
- ✓ Informed
- ✓ Descriptive
- ✓ Not Redundant

Categorization

Most retailers associate the category value with shoppers who drill down from a category tree, but the marketplaces category that you choose is a validating data point. If you're selling those small paper umbrellas that are popular for tropical cocktails, then seeing your product categorized under Kitchen or Barware will be more validating than search results found under Clothing & Accessories categories. You can bet that marketplaces' search algorithms factor this into their operations as well, so it's key to pay attention to the category you've selected.



SEO TIP:
When it comes to categorization, choose the most specific value available. Use ChannelAdvisor's Product Categorizer to make suggestions for better keywords to describe item type.

Search Terms

Search terms are probably the most popular data point that comes to mind when you think about SEO. And for good reason. You can think of search terms as invisible keywords that are added to your titles. Amazon offers up to five search terms that can be added to each listing. Each search term can be up to 50 characters and you can use multiple words as one search term. You'll want to use keywords that are not already found in your title. Alternate spellings and synonyms are great search terms because they are hidden from the shopper, so your titles don't look like they are "keyword stuffed."



SEO TIP:
Get clues for search terms from the names of category and browse nodes. For example, Bedding Ensemble or Early Learning Game resemble category names and are also great search terms.

Product Specifics

Many marketplaces use defining characteristics of a product as a way to help shoppers refine search results. On eBay, these characteristics are called Item Specifics. On Amazon and other marketplaces, they are called product attributes. They're not only great for search refinement, but can also be used by marketplace search algorithms to match search queries to present more relevant results. For example, including "bronze" as the metal type for a bathroom fixture can help power an appropriate match when a shopper uses that search term. Product specifics give you twice the impact because they help with product refinement in browsing and searching activities.



SEO TIP:
Product identifiers are one of the most important data values to include. Don't forget these essentials:
✓ UPC, EAN or ISBN
✓ Manufacturer Part Number

Description Optimization

Lastly, you'll want to make sure that your descriptions are thorough and rich with appropriate descriptive text about your product. While content in your description is usually less of a factor for SEO, it's still included to a degree and also serves as another point of validation for the marketplace to confirm that consistent keywords are used in the entire listing.



SEO TIP:
Don't forget that bullet points are a great place to optimize and support product keywords.

How do you know what content to add?

Now that you know which data points to update, you might be asking yourself what the actual content should be. This is where a resource like ChannelAdvisor's Actionable Retail Insights will come in handy. With this tool, ChannelAdvisor pulls in recommendations from eBay and Amazon about how to improve your listing quality. This can help you make a big impact to your SEO right out of the gate, by focusing on the changes the marketplaces itself indicates are important.

For eBay, ChannelAdvisor will show you:

- Item specific recommendations
- UPC recommendations
- Category recommendations
- Title recommendations and more

For Amazon, ChannelAdvisor will show you Listing Quality Opportunities with suggestions for where to add missing product details like material or composition.

You can also step outside the marketplace itself to see what suggestions can be found from the digital marketing side of e-commerce. After all, who knows SEO better than Google? You can use products like Google's Keyword Tool or Keyword Planner to get keyword suggestions. ChannelAdvisor's Digital Marketing platform also tracks and brings to the surface additional keywords within the Keyword Generator so they can be easily added to product details.

The key principle to any SEO content you add is relevancy. The more relevant your content is to the search queries used, the better your chances of appearing higher in search results.



SEO TIP:

Apply the tools and knowledge you have about digital marketing SEO for added insights into keywords and content optimization.

How Catalog Listings Impact SEO

When creating a plan for SEO on marketplaces it's important to know whether or not the marketplace listing you are optimizing for is shared with other sellers or is unique to your business. This lets you know whether the changes you make will be seen or not.

eBay is the primary marketplace where each listing is wholly owned by the seller and not shared, so the SEO efforts you implement on eBay go directly to your benefit. Since you control the entire listing, any changes you make will be updated on the listing.

Marketplaces like Amazon have a catalog of SKUs that are offered for sale and more than one seller can be associated with each listing. This means that if you make an update to the title, product details or other values associated with your listing, you may not see the change reflected in the live listing.

Even though your updates are not guaranteed to be utilized in listings shared with other sellers, they are still a great investment to make. Amazon (and other marketplaces) tend to give the priority of the listing to any platinum level seller or the first seller to establish the product listing. However, don't give up if you don't fall in one of those buckets. With hard work and consistency, your data can be given priority on listings. Here's how:

1. Select a poorly constructed listing that is not using your data
2. Optimize the product content that you are including in your Amazon feed for that product
3. Contact Seller Central support to ask that they consider your data to override the original
4. Repeat for additional items (and ideally, your entire catalog)
5. After showing a consistent history of having high-quality data and submitting requests to have listing content use your data, ask Seller Central support to give you an override for all the products you have in this category



SEO TIP:

Make sure your e-commerce solution **automatically** updates each marketplace when you make optimizations to your inventory.

The key to establishing yourself as a content leader is to have well-formed, high-quality data across *all* of your products. Be sure to demonstrate this before requesting that Amazon or any other marketplace consider giving you a universal override as the primary data contributor for your product lines.

How Do You Optimize Content Quickly?

At this point, you may be sold on SEO for marketplaces, but still be scratching your head about how to manage it all. Our best recommendation? Work smarter, not harder. You'll speed your SEO effort along more quickly if you have tools to help you make these changes efficiently.

ChannelAdvisor is designed to make SEO on marketplaces something achievable for every seller. It's the core of what we do and we help in several ways.

Inventory Management

The best way to ace SEO is to start with excellent product data — data that can be easily sent and used on marketplaces. ChannelAdvisor's Inventory Management provides that central location for you to store all your product details for use for e-commerce. This means a scalable hub for your business to launch from, without duplication of data and effort.

Data Optimization

Not only that, but with ChannelAdvisor's Data Transformation Engine, retailers can apply business rules and lookup lists to product data so that it can be transformed with automation into truly optimized content. Imagine having the ability to slice, dice and serve your data automatically to create a data masterpiece perfect for each channel and marketplace you work with. That's what our Data Transformation Engine gives you.

Marketplaces Integrations

Plus, using the power of our integrations with marketplaces, you can send customized feeds to each marketplace destination. Within each feed you put the Data Transformation Engine to work for you to send the best data available and deal with any exceptions that you need to make. After your feed is sent, we'll even share Actionable Retail Insights with you so you can customize your product details on eBay and Amazon for even better performance.



So, what are you waiting for?

Now that you're aware SEO on marketplaces is a real thing — get busy implementing your business's SEO strategy.

We're kind of passionate about this topic and would love to share our enthusiasm, tips and tools with you, so give us a call today. Our marketplaces experts can show you how ChannelAdvisor can help you earn success with SEO on marketplaces. Contact us at info@channeladvisor.com or 866-264-8594.

Trust us. **Be Seen.**

To learn more:

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