

ECOMMERCE SEO CHECKLIST

2026 Edition - Solve the 3 Killers Killing Your Store

THE THREE KILLERS: (1) Manual product optimization burns 20+ hours/week. (2) Manufacturer descriptions make you invisible to Google. (3) Category pages sit empty while competitors steal your traffic. This checklist fixes all three with AI-powered solutions, platform-specific stacks, and a 90-day testing framework that measures revenue - not vanity traffic.

THE DATA: WHY AI SEO IS NON-NEGOTIABLE FOR ECOMMERCE

The numbers don't lie. Stores still doing SEO by hand are falling behind.

47% of online sellers now use AI to write product descriptions

AI-generated product descriptions are beneficial for large stores with thousands of items as well as small shops that may not have enough staff to keep their pages up to date. (Source: Liquid Web / Semrush 2025)

65% of businesses report better SEO results after integrating AI tools

The improvement comes from increased speed and scale. AI helps with topic planning, content drafting, and faster publishing, allowing teams to spend more time on strategy and optimization. (Source: Search Engine Journal 2025)

AI-assisted content production cuts production time by 40-50%

What takes days manually, AI completes in minutes. For stores with 500+ products, this is the difference between optimizing your catalog this quarter... or next year. (Source: Search Engine Journal 2025)

70% of AI search recommendations incorporate user-generated content

Reviews, ratings, and Q&A; serve as powerful trust indicators that AI engines use to surface products. Without them, you're invisible to AI-driven shopping results. (Source: McKinsey Digital)

AI Overviews now appear on ~21% of keywords

Google's AI summaries are reshaping search. Your product pages need to be citable, not just rankable. Structured data and FAQ schema are now essential. (Source: Ahrefs 2026)

KILLER #1: MANUAL PRODUCT OPTIMIZATION

Stores with 500+ products spend 20+ hours per week on manual SEO. At \$50/hour, that's \$4,000+/month in labor for work AI does in minutes.

THE SOLUTION: AI BULK AUTOMATION

Automate meta titles across your entire catalog

Use AI tools that generate unique titles per SKU in seconds. Format: [Brand] [Product] [Key Attribute] | [Store Name]. Keep under 60 characters. Include price or shipping hooks when space allows.

Automate meta descriptions at scale

AI generates compelling, keyword-rich descriptions under 155 characters per product. What takes a human 3-4 minutes per SKU takes AI 3-4 seconds.

Bulk-generate alt text for every product image

Descriptive, keyword-aware alt text: 'mens-waterproof-trail-running-shoe-black-nike.jpg' not 'IMG_4721.jpg'. Use bulk image optimizers to compress and rename simultaneously.

Set up template-based rules for variants

Color and size variants should share canonical metadata with the parent product, while distinct variants (e.g., limited editions) get unique treatment.

KILLER #2: DUPLICATE MANUFACTURER CONTENT

Google indexes only ONE version of identical text. If 50 stores sell the same SKU with the same description, 49 of them are invisible. You lose by default.

THE SOLUTION: AI UNIQUE REWRITES

AI-rewrite every product description to 300-500 unique words

Feed your AI tool product attributes (material, dimensions, use cases, brand story) and get unique, benefit-led copy per SKU. No two descriptions should be identical.

Use the 80/20 priority hierarchy

Hand-rewrite your top 20% bestsellers (highest revenue). AI-rewrite the next 50%. Use template + AI hybrid for the bottom 30%. This maximizes ROI while eliminating duplicate content everywhere.

Add FAQ schema to top-performing products

Genuine Q&A; ('What size should I buy?' 'Is this waterproof?') feeds People Also Ask and AI Overviews. This is how you get cited by AI search engines.

Inject brand voice and use cases into every description

Manufacturer copy lists features. Your AI-rewritten copy translates features into outcomes: 'Waterproof membrane' becomes 'Keeps your feet dry through 3-hour hikes in heavy rain.'

KILLER #3: EMPTY CATEGORY / COLLECTION PAGES

Most stores have a title, an H1, and a product grid. No content, no context, no ranking signal. Category pages drive 3-5x more traffic than individual product pages when optimized.

THE SOLUTION: CATEGORY-SPECIFIC KEYWORD RESEARCH + UNIQUE COPY

Write 150-250 words of unique category copy

Above the grid: 50-100 words introducing the category with semantic keywords. Below the grid: 100-150 words with FAQs, buying tips, and internal links to subcategories.

Create subcategory pages for high-intent filter combinations

If customers search 'black flare jeans' and you only have 'Jeans,' you're losing that traffic. Turn high-demand filters into indexable landing pages with unique titles, H1s, and copy.

Use category-specific keyword research

Don't target broad terms like 'running shoes.' Target 'trail running shoes for wide feet' or 'lightweight running shoes under \$100.' These have lower competition and higher conversion intent.

Add BreadcrumbList + ItemList + CollectionPage schema

This tells Google and AI engines that this page is a product collection, not an article. It also reinforces site hierarchy and improves crawl efficiency.

Strategic internal linking from blog to category

Write 2-3 posts per month ('How to Choose Trail Running Shoes') and link to relevant category pages with descriptive anchor text. This is the #1 underrated ecommerce SEO tactic.

THE 90-DAY ECOMMERCE TESTING FRAMEWORK

Don't optimize products one by one. Run a system. Test, measure, kill or scale.

PHASE	TIMELINE	FOCUS	SUCCESS METRIC
Phase 1: Technical Foundation	Days 1-14	Fix faceted nav, duplicate content, schema, Core Web Vitals. Stop the bleeding before optimizing.	0 critical errors. 100% valid Product schema. LCP < 2.5s.
Phase 2: Bulk Product Velocity	Days 15-60	AI-automate meta data, rewrite descriptions, optimize images, add FAQ schema across catalog.	100% unique descriptions. Meta auto-generated. 20% keyword movement.
Phase 3: Category Domination	Days 61-90	Write unique category copy. Build subcategory pages. Internal link from blog. Track revenue.	+10% organic revenue. 10+ category terms top 10. 1+ sale from organic.

THE GOLDEN RULE FOR ECOMMERCE

Measure revenue, not traffic. A #1 ranking for 'best running shoes' with zero sales is worse than a #8 ranking for 'buy Nike Air Zoom Pegasus 40' that converts. Ecommerce SEO is a revenue game. Optimize for buyers, not browsers.

MARGINSEYEDIGITAL'S RECOMMENDED ECOMMERCE TOOL STACKS

Pick ONE stack for your platform. Don't fight your platform - use tools built for it.

PLATFORM	STARTER (\$0-24/mo)	GROWTH (\$50-99/mo)	SCALE (\$100-200/mo)
Shopify	TinyIMG (free) + Shopify native SEO + GSC	TinyIMG (\$14) + Sherpas Smart SEO (\$10) + ChatGPT Plus (\$20)	Booster SEO (\$39) + Ryze AI (\$99) + TinyIMG (\$14)
WooCommerce	Rank Math Free + GSC + ShortPixel free	Rank Math Pro (\$59/yr) + AIOSEO Basic (\$50/yr) + ShortPixel	Rank Math Pro + AIOSEO Pro (\$200/yr) + Surfer SEO (\$89/mo)
Magento	Magento 2 SEO Suite (free) + GSC + Screaming Frog	Mirasvit SEO (\$199/yr) + ChatGPT Plus (\$20)	Mirasvit SEO + Amasty SEO (\$299/yr) + Semrush (\$129/mo)

WARNING: Don't install 5 overlapping SEO apps. Conflicting JSON-LD markup and slower load times actively hurt rankings. Two apps max: one for technical/schema, one for AI content.

AI PRODUCT DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

Feed this structure to your AI tool for consistent, high-converting, unique output every time:

- Paragraph 1 (Hook):** Who is this for? What problem does it solve? Include primary keyword naturally.
- Paragraph 2 (Specs):** Key features, dimensions, materials, compatibility. Use bullet points.
- Paragraph 3 (Benefits):** Translate specs into outcomes. 'Waterproof membrane' -> 'Keeps feet dry through 3-hour hikes in heavy rain.'
- Paragraph 4 (Social Proof):** Mention reviews, awards, or certifications. 'Rated 4.8/5 by 1,200+ customers.'
- FAQ Section (3-5 questions):** Real questions from customer service or reviews. Add FAQPage schema.
- CTA:** Clear next step. 'Add to cart for free 2-day shipping.'
- Target:** 300-500 words per SKU. 100% unique from manufacturer copy.

CATEGORY PAGE OPTIMIZATION STRUCTURE

Copy this structure for every category / collection page:

H1: [Category Name] + [Use Case Modifier] | [Brand]
Example: 'Men's Trail Running Shoes for All Terrain | RunPro'

Intro (50-100 words): What this category covers, who it's for, key differentiators. Include 2-3 semantic keywords.

Product Grid: Curated listings with images, titles, prices, ratings, availability badges.

Subcategory Links: 'Shop by: Waterproof / Lightweight / Wide Fit / Zero Drop'

Bottom Content (100-150 words): Buying guide tips, FAQ schema, links to related blog posts.

Schema: BreadcrumbList, ItemList, CollectionPage, FAQPage

Internal Links: Link to 2-3 related categories and 1-2 top blog posts.

THE 90-DAY ECOMMERCE TESTING SCORECARD

Track weekly. If you don't measure revenue, you're guessing.

METRIC	BASE	W4	W8	W12	TARGET
Organic Revenue	\$____	\$____	\$____	\$____	+10%
Organic Sessions	____	____	____	____	+15%
Product Pages Optimized	____	____	____	____	100%
Category Pages w/ Unique Copy	____	____	____	____	100%
Product Keywords Pos 1-10	____	____	____	____	+10
Category Keywords Pos 1-10	____	____	____	____	+5
Site Health Score	____	____	____	____	90+
Critical Errors	____	____	____	____	0
Avg Product Page Load	____	____	____	____	<2.5s
Valid Product Schema	____%	____%	____%	____%	100%
New Reviews Collected	____	____	____	____	20+

GO / NO-GO DECISION MATRIX

Day 90. Be honest with yourself.

CONTINUE IF:

PIVOT OR DOWNGRADE IF:

- 100% of catalog has unique descriptions
- Organic revenue grew 10%+
- 10+ product/category keywords in top 10
- Valid schema on 100% of URLs
- Tool cost under 5% of monthly organic revenue
- At least 1 sale attributed to organic search

- Still using manufacturer descriptions after 60 days
- Zero keyword movement after optimizing catalog
- Category pages still have no unique copy
- Page speed got worse after installing apps
- Organic traffic grew but revenue didn't
- Paying for features you don't use

THE ECOMMERCE SEO WEEKLY CHECKLIST

Run this every Monday. Takes 30 minutes once you build the habit.

Technical (5 min)

Check GSC for coverage errors, indexing issues, or Core Web Vitals failures. Fix anything new immediately.

Product Pages (10 min)

Verify new products have unique descriptions, meta titles, and alt text before publish. Spot-check 5 random SKUs for quality.

Category Pages (5 min)

Confirm category copy is live, schema is valid, and internal links point to active pages.

Reviews & UGC (5 min)

Respond to new reviews. Check that review aggregate ratings display correctly in SERPs. Request reviews from recent customers.

Content & Links (5 min)

Publish or schedule 1-2 pieces of content. Add internal links from last week's blog post to relevant category pages.

FINAL NOTES FROM MARGINSEYEDIGITAL

- 1. Revenue beats traffic.** A #1 ranking for 'best running shoes' with zero sales is worse than a #8 ranking for 'buy Nike Air Zoom Pegasus 40' that converts. Optimize for buyers, not browsers.
- 2. Category pages drive 3-5x more traffic than product pages** when optimized with unique copy and schema. They're also 10x faster to optimize because there are fewer of them.
- 3. AI Overviews now appear on ~21% of keywords.** Your content needs to be citable, not just rankable. FAQs and comparison content are your best shot at AI visibility.
- 4. The 80/20 rule applies to product catalogs.** 20% of your SKUs drive 80% of revenue. Hand-rewrite those. AI-rewrite the rest. Never let perfection be the enemy of published.
- 5. Faceted navigation is the silent killer.** If 40%+ of Googlebot's crawls hit parameter URLs, you're burning crawl budget on pages that never convert. Canonicalize or AJAX-filter immediately.
- 6. Reviews are a ranking signal AND a conversion driver.** Star ratings in SERPs increase CTR by 35%+. Ask for reviews within 24 hours of delivery. Automate the ask.
- 7. Internal linking is the most underrated tactic in ecommerce SEO.** Blog posts about 'how to choose X' should link to your category pages with descriptive anchor text. This passes authority where it converts.
- 8. Don't tool-hop.** Pick one stack for your platform. Run it for 90 days. Measure revenue. Then decide. Switching tools every month is how you spend \$400+/mo and get nowhere.
- 9. Start at \$0 if you have to.** Google Search Console, Screaming Frog Free, and Ahrefs Webmaster Tools can handle your first 30 days. Only spend money when you hit a bottleneck you can't solve for free.

- Built by MarginseyeDigital for ecommerce owners who sell products, not theory. -