



Working checklist

Complete SEO Checklist for Shopify

Indexing, content and search visibility to verify, with evidence and a decision for every check.

Francesco Guiducci

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How to use this checklist

I start an SEO review with the pages the business actually needs people to find. I check whether they are accessible, whether they answer the customer's question, and whether the data points to a specific problem. Removing an indexing obstacle is different work from improving a product page or proposing an editorial collaboration.

Use it for an initial assessment and for later reviews. You end up with a documented set of checks and a plan ordered by impact. It promises no rankings, sales or citations in AI search. The examples are illustrative: apply only the activities that fit the store.

Define the scope

Field	To complete
Domain, store and theme version	...
Markets, languages and page types	...
Priority products or services	...
Data period and comparison	...
Review owner and date	...
Sample URLs and evidence location	...

For S01–S13 use one of these outcomes: **OK, NEEDS CORRECTION, NOT VERIFIED, NOT APPLICABLE**. A page that is unindexed on purpose is not an error to eliminate. PO means a serious blocker on priority pages or a security issue; P1 a technical or informational defect that needs correcting; P2 an opportunity to assess.

Choose a sample by template and market: home, collection, available product, sold-out product, article, information page and language variants. Add filtered, paginated or migrated URLs where they exist. If you audit only a sample, say so: one product's behaviour does not certify the whole catalogue.

S01 · Access, properties and baseline (P1)

Open Search Console and check the property's domain. A Domain property uses DNS verification; a URL-prefix property covers the prefix you specify and supports other verification methods. Keep access under the business's control.

Save a baseline export of clicks, impressions, CTR and position, with filters, search type and dates. Keep queries and pages separate: one query can show several URLs. For behaviour after the click, use Shopify Analytics or GA4 with verified implementation and consent. Do not expect every query to appear in standard GA4 acquisition reports.

- ☐ Property, domain and access are correct.
- ☐ Security issues and manual actions have been checked.
- ☐ Priority pages have a recorded baseline.
- ☐ Other relevant search engines, such as Bing, have their own check.

Evidence: an export with dates and filters, report URLs and notes on limitations. Installing analytics tools does not improve rankings on its own.

S02 - Public access and indexing (P0/P1)

For each priority URL, check the HTTP response, the public content, the absence of unexpected password protection and access to essential resources. Inspect robots.txt, meta robots and the relevant headers. Use URL Inspection to tell the indexed state apart from a live test: they are different observations.

Robots.txt controls crawling; it is not a reliable way to remove a page from the index. For Google to read a noindex rule, the page must not be blocked in robots.txt: if it is, the crawler never sees the noindex and the URL can stay in results. Google does not support noindex written inside robots.txt. After you add a noindex, Google needs to recrawl the page, which can take time.

Shopify generates a `sitemap.xml` at the root of every domain and updates it when you add products, collections, articles or pages. The file links to separate sitemaps for products, collections, blogs and pages. Open it on the correct domain, inspect a few representative URLs and submit its address in Search Console under Indexing > Sitemaps. With international domains, verify and submit the sitemap for each domain. Do not maintain a manual copy of the generated sitemap. A sitemap helps URL discovery, with no guarantee of timing or indexing.

Shopify also generates robots.txt. You customise it with a `robots.txt.liquid` template in the theme, but Shopify treats this as an unsupported customisation: support will not help, and a mistake can wipe out your traffic. Start from the generated template and change only the rules you need. Do not replace it with plain text, because Shopify could then no longer update the default rules. The rules are advisory; crawlers are not obliged to follow them.

URL or group	Intended state	Observed and evidence	Action
Priority product	Indexable	...	...
Page excluded on purpose	Consistent exclusion	...	...
New page	Accessible; indexing monitored	...	...

Closing S02. Every important exclusion is explained. The goal is not to bring every exclusion in the report to zero.

S03 - Architecture, collections and internal links (P1)

Start from customer journeys: category, selection, product and the information needed to decide. A collection should represent a useful way to choose; no minimum number of products or words makes one valid.

Check that important pages can be reached through usable HTML links with text that describes the destination. Menus and footers should not become indiscriminate lists of every keyword. Use breadcrumbs where they help orientation, and check that the path shown is consistent.

- ☐ Every priority page receives at least one relevant link.
- ☐ Labels make sense without extra context.
- ☐ Filters and pagination reach the whole intended catalogue.
- ☐ No important link ends in an error or the wrong language.
- ☐ Guides link to relevant products without turning every sentence into a promotion.

Exercise. Find a product starting from the home page and note where you had to guess. Shallower navigation can help, but «three clicks» is not a Google requirement. Fix the actual obstacle and keep the before and after journey.

S04 - Search intent and page mapping (P1/P2)

Collect the words used by customers, internal search, support and Search Console. Keyword tools can supplement the list: volume and difficulty are estimates, not traffic promises.

Review current results for the market and language, and ask which task dominates: choosing a category, buying a product, comparing options or learning how to use something. Map each group of questions to a page that can satisfy it.

Question or intent	Suitable page	Information needed	Decision
Find a product category	Collection	Choice and comparison criteria	...
Check a specific model	Product	Specifications and availability	...
Learn a procedure	Article or guide	Steps, limits and sources	...

A shared query does not prove cannibalisation. Check whether the URLs serve the same need, whether they alternate in a problematic way, and whether traffic lands on the wrong page. Before merging content, weigh distinct value, links and conversions.

Evidence required: query → URL → period → intent → rationale for the decision.

S05 - Titles, descriptions and the main heading (P1)

Inspect both the source and the rendered page: SEO title, meta description and visible heading can come from different fields or blocks. Make every title descriptive and distinguishable, without repeated branding or keyword strings.

Do not treat 60 characters as a Google limit: a result title can be shortened to fit the space, or rewritten. Snippets can also come from the page content. The title-link documentation describes these behaviours.

Illustrative example: «750 ml stainless steel insulated bottle | Brand» identifies the product and its capacity. The description can explain real features, use and relevant conditions, without inventing performance or free shipping. Match the language of the content.

- ☐ Title and description match the published page.
- ☐ The main heading stands out clearly in the visual structure.
- ☐ H2 and H3 organise real sections, without forced keywords.
- ☐ The body does not repeat the H1 the template already outputs.
- ☐ Duplicate titles were found with an inventory, not by assuming a dedicated Search Console report.

A single H1 is a useful editorial convention; several H1 elements are not a penalty in themselves. Close S05 after rereading the content and HTML of the correct version, translations included.

S06 - Useful, verifiable information (P1)

Read the whole page, not just the opening paragraph. A product page should settle questions about dimensions, materials, compatibility, package contents, use, availability and delivery. A service needs its audience, included work, exclusions and next steps. An article should keep the promise of its title.

Keep the manufacturer's correct technical data and add value where it is needed. Duplication does not in itself trigger a penalty; the problem may be a lack of distinct usefulness or inconsistent URL handling. Do not write artificially different descriptions for each variant when the useful information has not changed.

- ☐ Results, certifications and comparisons have supporting evidence.
- ☐ Prices and requirements that depend on plan or market are put in context.
- ☐ Author, responsibility and sources are identifiable where relevant.
- ☐ Revision dates reflect substantive updates.
- ☐ FAQs resolve real questions without repeating whole sections.

Update what has changed; do not just swap the year to simulate freshness. Remove any claim that rankings will improve because you added words or updated a date. Record each correction as incorrect information → source → new wording.

S07 · URLs, canonicals, filters and removed pages (P0/P1)

Keep existing URLs unless there is a concrete reason to change them. Shopify paths such as `/products/`, `/collections/` and `/pages/` are not defects to remove with an improvised migration.

Check the declared canonical and, where available, the one Google selected. Shopify adds canonical tags automatically; the theme or an app can change them. A canonical is a preference signal, not a redirect and not a guarantee. Do not point every variant or every language at the home page.

For filters, look at the generated URLs, their usefulness, the links to them and their actual index status. A filtered selection with its own demand may deserve a curated destination; low-value combinations do not all need indexing. Avoid global changes to robots or canonicals without a map and a sample test.

When you remove a page, choose between keeping the information, redirecting to a genuinely relevant replacement and returning a proper missing-page response. A temporarily sold-out product does not necessarily need deleting. Do not redirect every 404 to the home page: it can confuse visitors and is not a valid replacement.

In Shopify you create redirects under Content > Menus > URL redirects, one at a time or by CSV import, and they work immediately. They apply only to URLs that no longer load a page: if the old address still responds, the redirect does not fire. You cannot redirect system prefixes such as `/cart` or `/apps`, or the fixed paths `/products` and `/collections`. If the store uses market subfolders (for example `/en-ca/`), check that the redirect covers them too. Standard stores are limited to 100,000 redirects.

Test. Old URL ... → response ... → destination ...; internal links updated ...; no chain or loop Keep the previous rules so you can correct a mistake.

S08 · Images, media and Core Web Vitals (P1/P2)

Review images in context. Descriptive file names help organisation; alt text should convey the necessary information or function, without keyword lists. For decorative images, use an empty alternative where appropriate. Keep enough detail to judge the product.

Check the dimensions and format actually served, srcset, reserved space and mobile behaviour. Do not lazy-load the main above-the-fold image without testing it; use lazy loading where it avoids unnecessary initial work. An external video can still add requests and scripts, so measure the option you choose.

The Core Web Vitals are LCP, INP and CLS. The thresholds for a good experience are LCP within 2.5 s, INP within 200 ms and CLS within 0.1, assessed at the 75th percentile of field data, with mobile and desktop kept separate. INP became a stable metric in 2024, replacing FID: do not use FID in reports any more.

Page and device	Data and period	Observed problem	Change and evidence
...	Field or lab: ...	...	...
...	URL or origin: ...	...	...

When real-user data is insufficient, state the limitation and use lab tests to diagnose. App count and a PageSpeed score do not establish cause. Measure scripts, fonts and media, make the changes you can justify, and retest functionality. Good performance does not guarantee top rankings.

S09 - Structured data and product information (P1)

Before adding markup, inventory what the theme and apps already output. Shopify themes generate markup with the Liquid `structured_data` filter: a product without variants becomes a `Product`, one with variants a `ProductGroup`. Check that product, offers, availability, currency and reviews describe the actual page. Duplicate blocks with conflicting prices, for example from the theme and an app, need a clear technical owner.

Run the Rich Results Test on the URL and reread the values. If you use Merchant Center, also compare the feed with the page for the relevant market. For products with variants, and for the different search experiences, follow the relevant Product documentation.

Do not add FAQPage or HowTo markup to win rich results. Google has not shown FAQ rich results since 7 May 2026, and it retired HowTo rich results in 2023. Existing markup does not harm search and there is no rush to remove it; FAQs remain useful to readers as visible content. For generative search features, Google requires no special structured data, but it does expect markup to match the visible text.

- ☐ No review or rating is fabricated or unrelated to the product.
- ☐ Price, currency and availability match the visible offer.
- ☐ Errors and warnings are told apart and assessed for the result type.
- ☐ The markup stays consistent after a variant or market change.

A valid test proves the outcome of that test, not that stars will appear or CTR will rise. Google does not guarantee rich-result display; the quality guidelines apply as well.

S10 - Languages and markets (P1)

Open every language URL in the sample directly. Check content, title, navigation, internal links, product, prices and conditions. The switcher should lead to the equivalent resource where one exists, not always to the home page.

Check hreflang and canonical together. Alternatives must exist, agree, and point to each other, including the page itself. Google's guidance on localized versions helps you verify the setup. Automation does not make every translation correct.

Pair record. Italian URL ... / English URL ... / equivalent content ... / links and metadata ... / exception Report a missing page; do not invent a translation to link to.

S11 · Reputation, collaborations and external links (P1/P2)

Choose activities with a real audience and an editorial reason: a guide customers will use, data with a stated method, an authentic list of retailers, a verifiable announcement or an informed answer in a community. Judge relevance and usefulness before a tool's score.

For each opportunity write: audience → proposed resource → reader value → cost → observable result.

An external contribution should not exist only to earn a keyword link. Follow community rules and disclose your connection to the business where relevant.

Advertising and sponsored links need appropriate qualification, such as `rel="sponsored"` or `nofollow` as the case requires. Avoid link exchanges, link packages and comments built to manipulate rankings. There is no anchor-text or `nofollow` ratio to imitate. Follow Google's spam policies.

A backlink review can reveal mentions and problems, but a «toxic» score alone does not justify a disavow. Google says most sites do not need one: read the requirements of the procedure before acting.

If the business is eligible for a Google Business Profile, check identity, address or service area, hours and contact details. An online-only store does not become eligible just because it has an administrative address: check the rules on business representation.

Closing S11. Initiatives chosen, an owner and a result to observe. No promise of automatic growth from mentions or backlinks. Ask for authentic feedback, and do not present reviews or badges as ranking certificates.

S12 · AI search and measuring opportunities (P1/P2)

Make information understandable and verifiable: identify the business, explain ambiguous terms, support claims, and keep pages, products and sources consistent. These choices serve readers first.

For Google Search, the usual SEO practices still apply. AI Overviews and AI Mode have no extra requirements: the page must be indexed and eligible to appear with a snippet. Google advises allowing crawling (including through your CDN and host), using internal links, keeping important content in text form, and keeping Merchant Center and Business Profile data current. You do not need `llms.txt`, other AI files, special markup or Markdown, and you do not need to split content into chunks. Do not create repetitive pages for every possible variant of a question. This guidance is for Google: do not extend it automatically to other engines.

To limit what Google shows, use the standard controls (`nosnippet` , `data-nosnippet` , `max-snippet` , `noindex`). Blocking AI crawlers in `robots.txt` does not stop Shopify Catalog from sending product data to agentic storefronts.

Appearances in Google's AI features count in the Performance report, under the Web search type. In June 2026 Google announced dedicated generative AI reports in Search Console, rolling out gradually. Check availability and definitions in the property you use: a connector may not expose the same data. Do not infer AI citations from the organic traffic trend alone.

For ordinary opportunities, compare equivalent periods and segment by page, query, country, device and language. If you separate brand from non-brand, save the classification rule. Calculate CTR as clicks ÷ impressions; never add up CTRs or positions. Anonymised queries and export limits can stop rows from matching the totals.

Working example. A relevant page with many impressions and few clicks calls for a review of intent, position, result type and title. It does not automatically have a bad meta description. Several URLs on one query call for a content comparison, not an automatic merge.

S13 - Correction plan and Done criteria

Check and URL	Outcome and evidence	Change and priority	Owner and review
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...

Put access blockers and wrong information on important pages first, then structure and content defects, then opportunities. Estimate dependencies and risk too: a global template change has a different impact from correcting one sentence in an article.

Done for the review. Sample and language coverage declared; every PO resolved or explicitly blocking; every P1 with a decision; corrected output reread; previous configuration recoverable; monitoring dates set. The review can close without claiming a ranking outcome you have not observed.

First action ... Reason and evidence ... Technical recheck date ... Results observation period ...

Keep the success of the technical fix separate from its effect on search. A corrected canonical can be checked at once; Google's selection and the traffic trend need later observation.

Sources

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