

Advanced SEO at Scale for Ecommerce & Marketplace Brands

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Who am I?

- **Independent SEO consultant**
- **Based in Melbourne, Australia**
- **Working in SEO for 13 years**
(self-employed for 7 of those)
- **Work with large brands**
(Tripadvisor, Hewlett-Packard, Shutterstock, eBay Kleinanzeigen etc.)



Client Experience

shutterstock

Better Homes
& Gardens

DRIVE



Tripadvisor

zooplus

NEWS

BED BATH N' TABLE

kleinanzeigen



CITY BEACH
AUSTRALIA

Airtasker

AutoGuru

Pets4Homes

WebJet

envato

Airwallex

Stuff

Obsessed with product feeds and Google Merchant Center



Agenda



~30 mins + Q&A

1

Google Merchant Center Next (for SEO)

2

Hidden Guidelines/Quirks

3

Operating at Scale

4

Category Content in 2026

5

Local Inventory Feeds

6

Top Quality Store Ranking Boost

7

AI in Ecommerce & Future Developments

Understanding Google's Shopping Ads guidelines is important for organic shopping



**Do I need to run Shopping ads to be
successful within free listings?**

NO

**(Though I've have had many experiences that
make this answer less straightforward).**

Organic Shopping Quirks

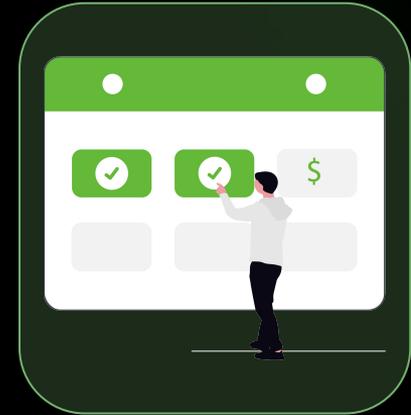
Wholesalers



Rented Products



Item Bidding



1. Combined: One Primary Feed



2. Separate: Distinct Feeds



1. Combined: One Primary Feed



2. Separate: Distinct Feeds

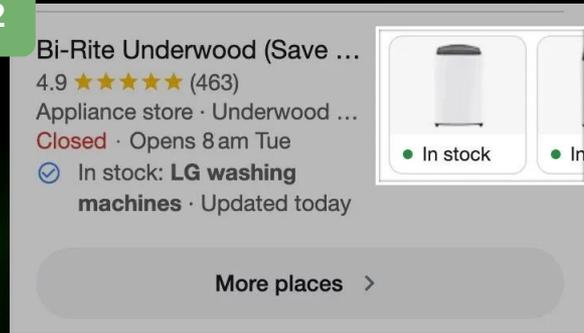


Ecommerce Stores with Physical Locations

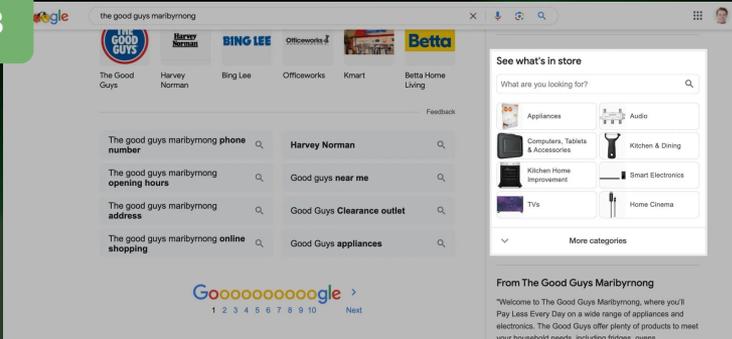
1



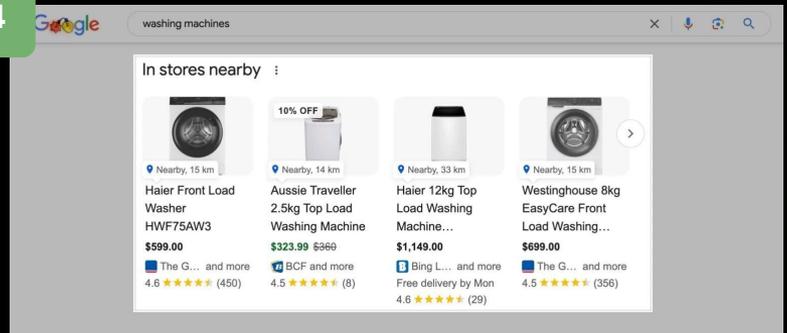
2



3



4



'In store' inventory labels in Europe

The screenshot shows a Google search for 'lakens' (bedsheets) in the Netherlands. The search results page displays several product listings from different retailers. Two listings are highlighted with green boxes around their 'In store' labels: 'HEMA.nl & more' and 'JYSK'. The 'In store' label is a small red icon with the text 'In store' next to it. The search results also show a list of related products, including 'HEMA Laken zacht katoen', 'IKEA DVALA sheet', 'JYSK Laken BOLETTE...', 'Laken 240 x 250 cm - wit', 'IKEA DVALA fitted sheet', 'Laken 150 x 250 cm - wit', 'Cinderella katoen laken', and 'JYSK Laken SANDRA satijn...'. The search results are displayed in a grid format, with each product listing including a small image, the product name, price, and retailer information. The search results are also displayed in a list format on the right side of the page, with each product listing including a larger image, product name, price, and retailer information. The search results are displayed in a grid format, with each product listing including a small image, the product name, price, and retailer information. The search results are also displayed in a list format on the right side of the page, with each product listing including a larger image, product name, price, and retailer information.

Search results for 'lakens' (bedsheets) in Europe, showing 'In store' inventory labels for products like HEMA Laken and JYSK Laken BOLETTE.

Search results for 'lakens' (bedsheets) in Europe, showing 'In store' inventory labels for products like HEMA Laken and JYSK Laken BOLETTE.

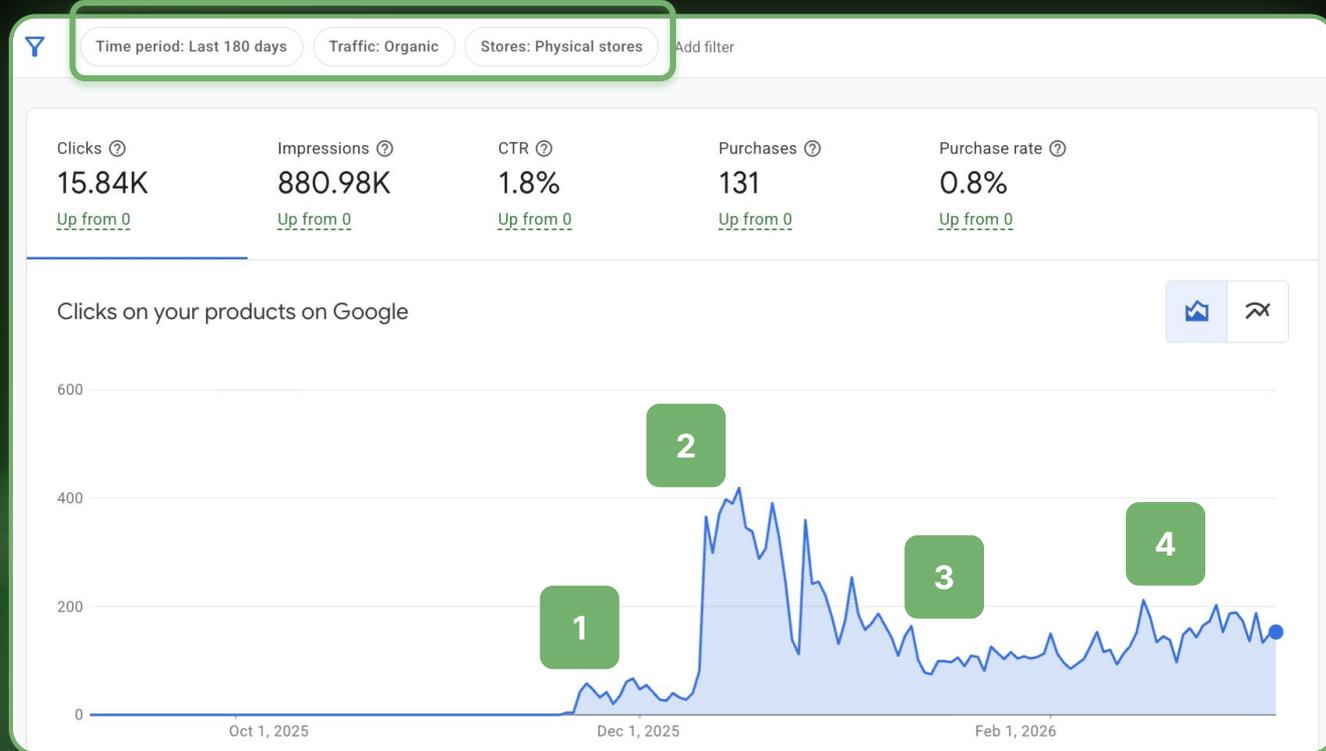
Search results for 'lakens' (bedsheets) in Europe, showing 'In store' inventory labels for products like HEMA Laken and JYSK Laken BOLETTE.

4 - 'In Stores Nearby'

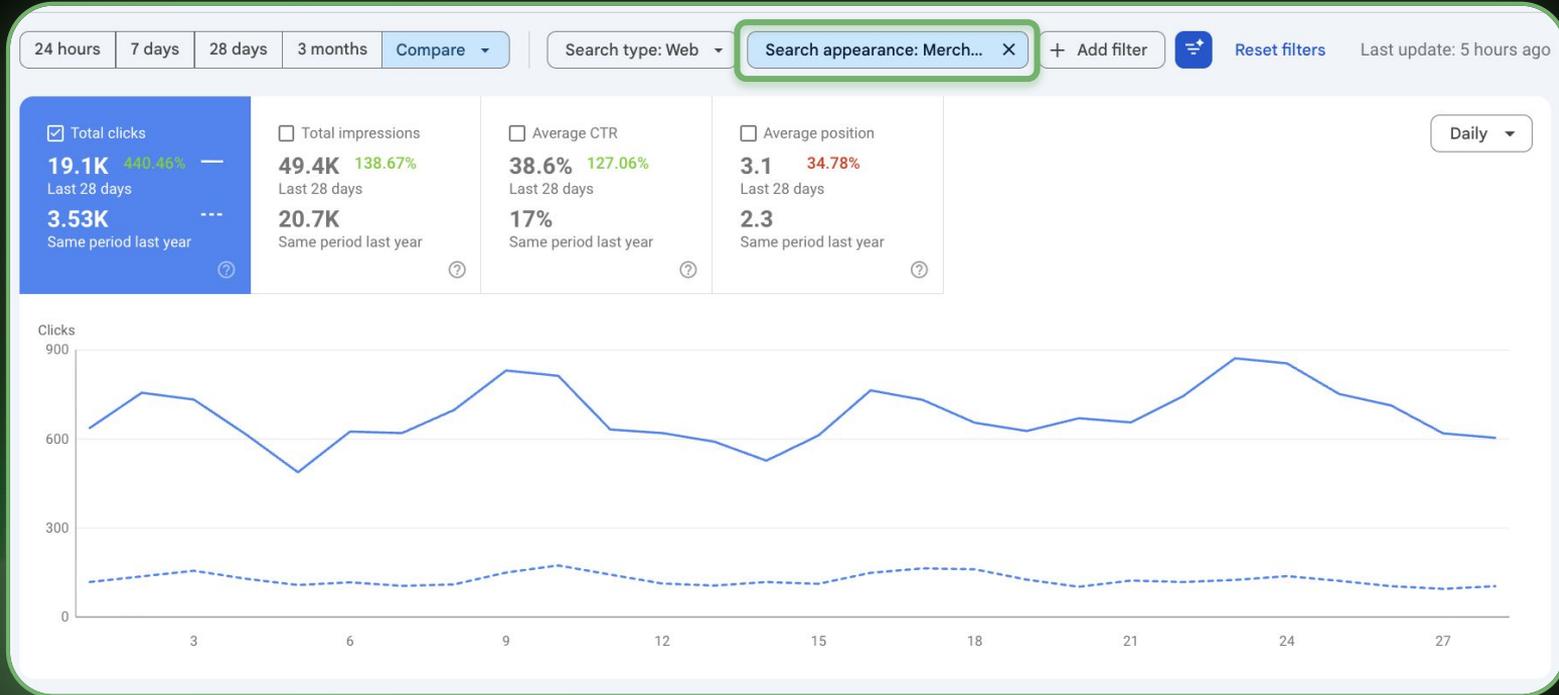
Grid Type	Spread	Position
'Deals On'	13.99%	7-10
'In Stores Nearby'	14.73%	4-6
'Fast Pickup or Delivery'	26.17%	4-6
'More Products'	64.74%	7-10
'Popular Products'	81.73%	1

Full Study: <https://brodieclark.com/google-free-listing-grid-types/>

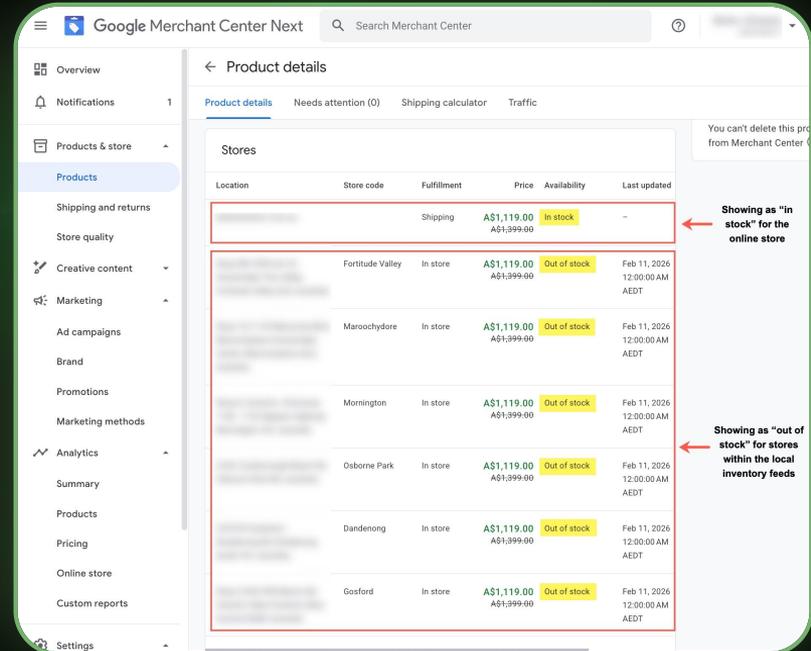
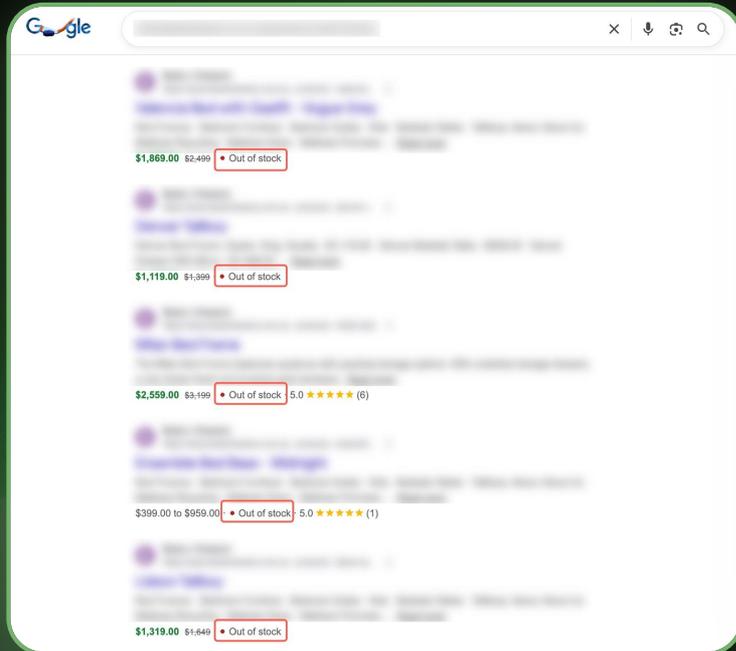
Local Inventory Case Study



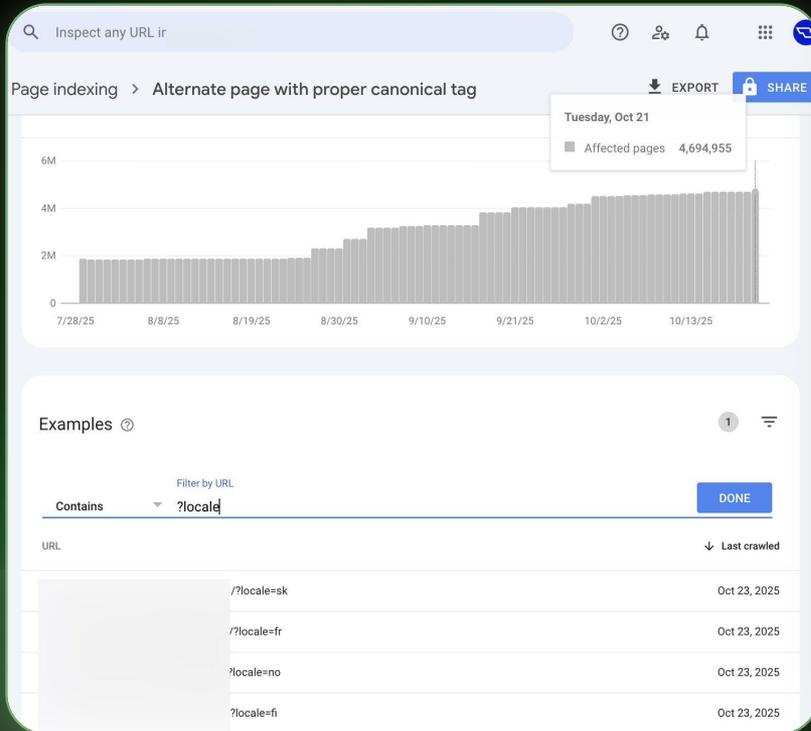
Local Inventory Case Study



Implementing a local inventory feed is one of the most challenging areas of eCommerce SEO



Local → Global



Linking to the language variant with a ?locale= parameter included on the end.

- Österreich
- België/Belgique
- België/Belgique (fr)
- Switzerland
- Česká republika
- Deutschland
- Danmark
- España
- Europe (en)
- Suomi
- France
- United Kingdom
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italia
- Nederland
- Norge
- Polska
- Portugal
- Sverige
- Slovakia
- United States

Tip: use schema to directly influence your merchant knowledge panel

Schema.org Documentation Schemas Validate About

https://www.burton.com/us/en/home

Run new test

Detected 0 ERRORS 0 WARNINGS 2 ITEMS

- Organization 0 ERRORS 0 WARNINGS 1 ITEM
- WebSite 0 ERRORS 0 WARNINGS 1 ITEM

Google burton

Shopping

Burton Snowboards

Site Name

Burton Snowboards

Burton.com | We Ride Together | People, Planet & Sport | Burton ...

Women

Men's Snowboards

Men's Gear & Apparel

Women's Snowboards

Snowboard Gear

Locations

Burton Denver Flagship Store

Burton Boulder Flagship Store

Burton

Burton Snowboards

Founder: John Burton Carpenter

Headquarters: Burlington, VT

Customer service: 1-800-883-3138

CEO: John Lay (2011-2018), Dave Carpenter (Feb 1, 2019 -)

Founded: December 1, 1977, Londonderry, VT

Number of employees: Over 600 U.S. 100 Global

Shop Burton Snowboards

Payment options

Trending

Profiles

Shipping and returns

Brand Knowledge Panel

It will allow you to prepare for the Business Agent rollout for the AI Chat Assistant

The screenshot shows the Google Merchant Center Next interface. On the left, a navigation menu lists various sections: Products & store, Products, Shipping and returns, Store quality, Creative content, Marketing, Ad campaigns, **Business Agent** (highlighted with a red box and a red arrow), Brand, Promotions, Marketing methods, Analytics, Summary, Products, Pricing, Online store, Settings, General, Business info, Data sources, Add-ons, and Access and services. The main content area is titled 'Business Agent' with a 'BETA ACCESS' badge. It features a heading 'Be a part of conversational AI customer journeys' and a sub-heading 'Google's Business Agent is an AI assistant that represents your business on Google and delivers instant, accurate answers to customers.' Below this, there are three bullet points: 'Attract customers with personalized product recommendations', 'Instantly answer shopper questions on Google', and 'Customize your agent with your unique brand'. A 'Claim your brand now to start customizing your agent.' link is present. A 'Claim now' button and a 'Get it' button are at the bottom. A warning message states: 'You don't have access to manage this Business Agent. Sign in as a super admin to make changes.' Below the warning, there are two sections: 'How your Business Agent appears' and 'Status'. The 'How your Business Agent appears' section includes an 'Ask about' input field and a 'Customer message' button. The 'Status' section indicates that the Business Agent is currently available in the US only and includes a 'Claim now' button.

The screenshot shows a Google search results page for 'adidas'. The search bar at the top contains 'adidas'. The results are categorized into several sections: 'Adidas' with a link to 'Sneakers and Activewear | adidas US', 'Sale' with a link to 'Get fresh for the season with up to 50% off adidas clothes, shoes ...', 'Men's Shoes' with a link to 'Shop men's shoes at adidas. Explore performance sneakers ...', 'Kids' Shoes and Clothes' with a link to 'Outfit your young athlete with the latest in kids' sneakers and ...', 'Women's Shoes' with a link to 'Browse adidas women's shoes for running, working out, casual ...', and 'Women' with a link to 'Inspire your next workout with the latest in women's sneakers and ...'. Below these are 'More results from adidas.com'. The 'Ask about adidas' section features a list of product recommendations: 'adidas Tracefinder Trail...' (\$60.00 \$70.00), 'adidas Terrex Agravic TT Trail...' (\$185.00), and 'adidas Terrex Agravic GTX Trail...' (\$132.00 \$165.00). Below the recommendations, there are social media links for Instagram (@adidas) and Wikipedia. The 'People also ask' section includes questions like 'Is Adidas Japanese or German?', 'What does Y3 mean?', and 'Who came first, Nike or Adidas?'. The bottom of the page has a 'Ask a question' input field.

Loyalty Programs + Deals

The screenshot shows a Google search for "petco" in Seattle. The search results list three Petco locations (A, B, and C) in Seattle, WA, each with contact information, hours, and services. A sidebar on the right displays "Loyalty benefits" and "Deals".

Brands: Unleashed by Petco, PetCoach, PetInsuranceQuotes.com
Number of employees: 27,000 (January 30, 2021)

Loyalty benefits

- Vital Care Core** (Free to join)
Members-only pricing and offers • Personalized care notifications
• Earn points back on every purchase
- Vital Care Premier** (Pay \$239.88/year)
Members-only pricing and offers • Personalized care notifications
• Earn \$15 Vital Care Rewards each month • +4
- Petco Pay Credit Card** (With Petco Pay Credit Card)
2 points earned per \$1.00 spent • 20% off your first purchase • Financing plans available • +1

Deals

- Up To 25% Off Raw Food, Mixers & Toppers
Ends Sep 1

More locations >

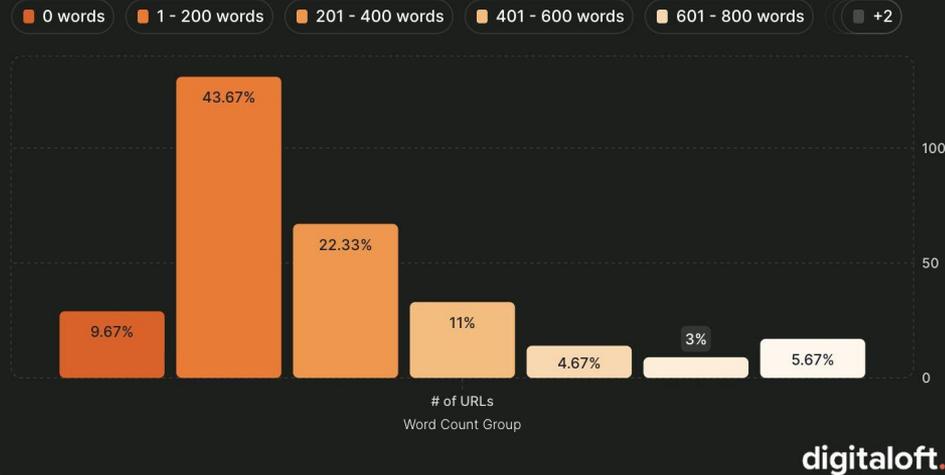
Yelp
https://m.yelp.com > Pets > Petco >
Petco Capitol Hill, Seattle, WA - Last Updated August 2025
The Interbay Petco has great parking, it's clean, the store carries a wide range of products. Up until today, I purchased most of my dog's food from the ...

Petco Love
https://petcolove.org >

Videos from Petco

Category Page Performance by Words

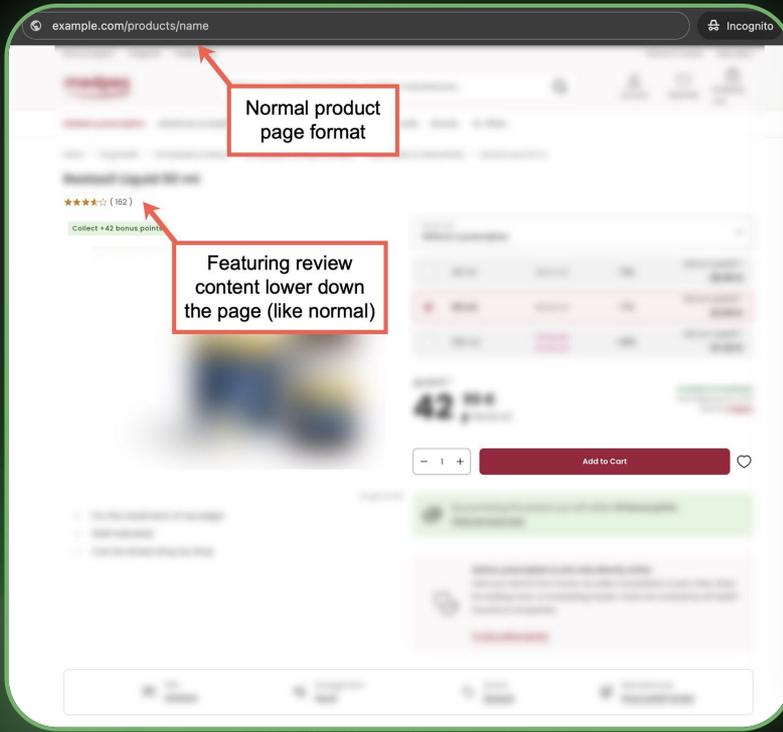
The average top-ranked eCommerce category page contains 310 words of content...



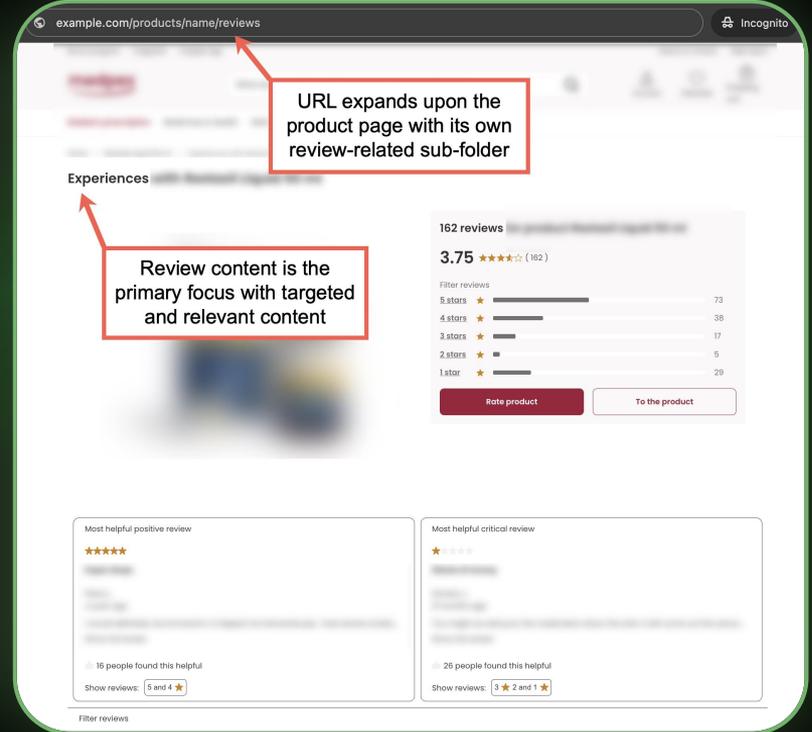
- 310 words was the magic number for the study
- Many other factors at play (brand size, content relevance etc.)
- Experiment with the number of products on the page
- If you don't have the product range, it will be meaningless
- Produce content that will still work in 5 years time

Full Study: <https://digitaloft.co.uk/category-page-content-length/>

Experiment With Different Approaches

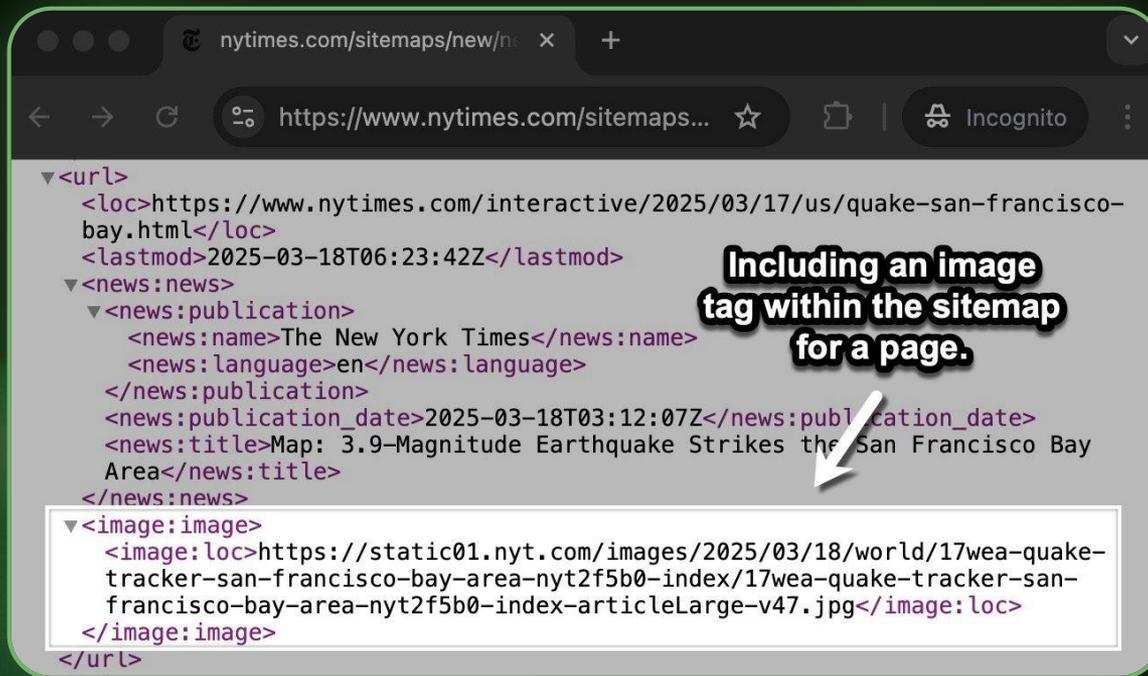


Normal product page



Page just for reviews

Tip: employ the forgotten art of sitemap management with `<image:loc>`



```
▼<url>
  <loc>https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/03/17/us/quake-san-francisco-bay.html</loc>
  <lastmod>2025-03-18T06:23:42Z</lastmod>
  ▼<news:news>
    ▼<news:publication>
      <news:name>The New York Times</news:name>
      <news:language>en</news:language>
    </news:publication>
    <news:publication_date>2025-03-18T03:12:07Z</news:publication_date>
    <news:title>Map: 3.9-Magnitude Earthquake Strikes the San Francisco Bay Area</news:title>
  </news:news>
  ▼<image:image>
    <image:loc>https://static01.nyt.com/images/2025/03/18/world/17wea-quake-tracker-san-francisco-bay-area-nyt2f5b0-index/17wea-quake-tracker-san-francisco-bay-area-nyt2f5b0-index-articleLarge-v47.jpg</image:loc>
  </image:image>
</url>
```

Including an image tag within the sitemap for a page.

Operating 3,300+ GMC Sub-Accounts

Google Merchant Center Next

Marketing methods: Free listings

Total	Approved	Limited	Not approved	Under review
14.1M	13.3M	462K	282K	11.2K
+2.4% vs 7 days ago	+10.2% vs 7 days ago	+7.8% vs 7 days ago	-76.9% vs 7 days ago	-26.3% vs 7 days ago

You can also view your past product status changes. [View history](#)

Sub-account	Approved	Limited	Not approved	Under review	Not approved since 7 days ago	Needs update
	195,799	705	2,126	28	-10,573 -83%	Products up-to-date
	152,266	447	1,749	32	-10,724 -86%	Products up-to-date
	152,265	346	1,663	21	-11,922 -87.8%	Products up-to-date
	152,158	365	1,743	32	-11,583 -86.9%	Products up-to-date
	151,826	576	1,768	70	-12,162 -87.4%	Products up-to-date
	151,805	382	1,588	159	-5,123 -76.3%	Products up-to-date
	151,787	641	1,339	30	-5,913 -81.5%	Products up-to-date
	151,647	649	2,104	25	-11,449 -84.5%	Products up-to-date
	151,642	657	2,054	524	-18,568 -90%	Products up-to-date
	151,578	949	1,279	73	-11,793 -90.2%	Products up-to-date

Show rows: 10 1 - 10 of 3242

Google Merchant Center Next

Marketing methods: Free listings

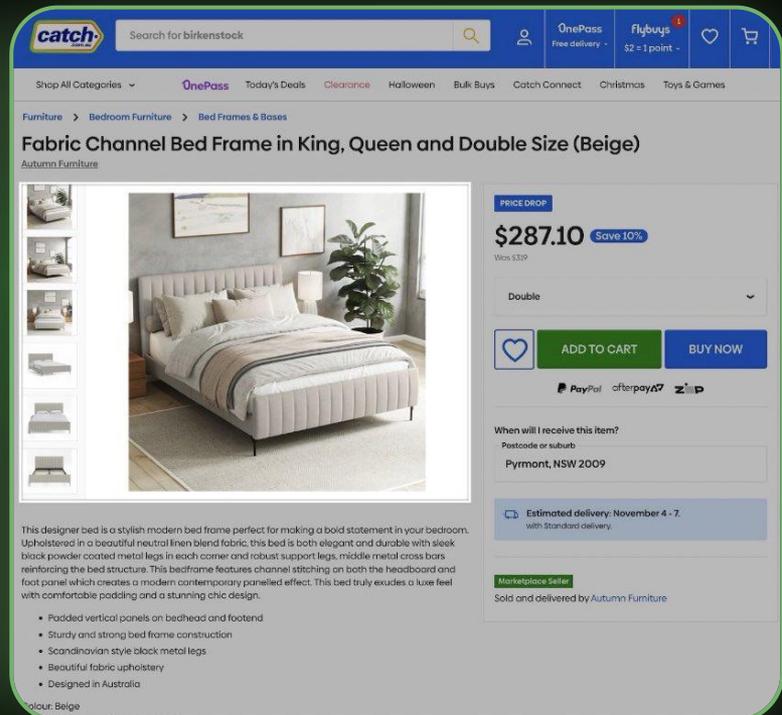
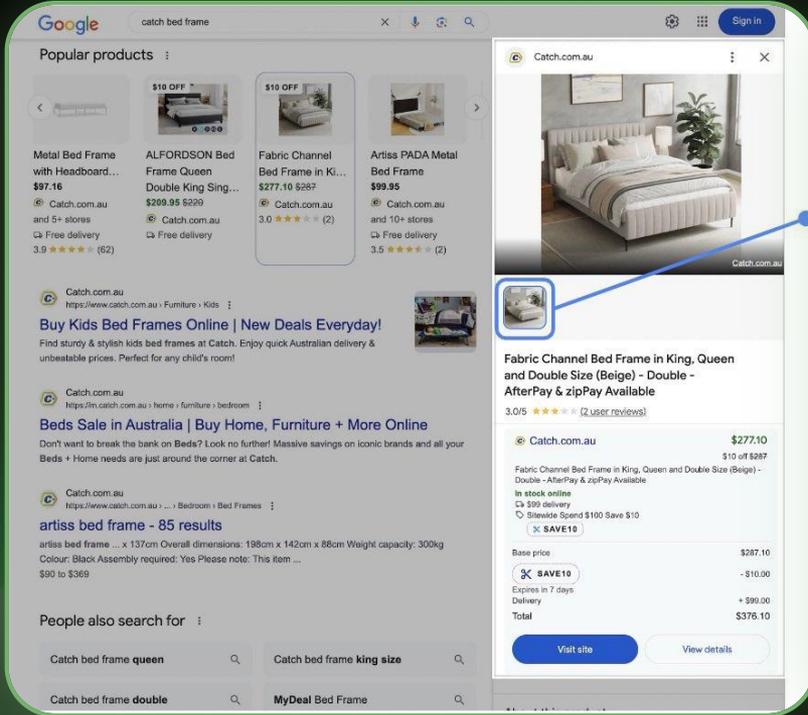
Total	Approved	Limited	Not approved	Under review
417K	238K	166K	8.94K	3.71K
+7.7% vs 7 days ago	+13.1% vs 7 days ago	+0.7% vs 7 days ago	+5.5% vs 7 days ago	+25.6% vs 7 days ago

You can also view your past product status changes. [View history](#)

Sub-account	Approved	Limited	Not approved	Under review	Not approved since 7 days ago	Needs update
	26,144	168	991	0	-205 -17.1%	Products up-to-date
	23,299	143	239	2	-62 -20.6%	Products up-to-date
	18,768	47	190	1	-104 -35.4%	Products up-to-date
	18,269	312	577	0	+577 Up from 0	Products up-to-date
	13,912	60	197	9	+7 +3.7%	Products up-to-date
	10,851	58	212	15	+8 +3.9%	Products up-to-date
	10,210	54	121	0	-35 -22.4%	Products up-to-date
	9,262	46	89	0	-29 -24.6%	Products up-to-date
	8,422	31	118	2	-41 -25.8%	Products up-to-date
	8,166	9	90	16	-29 -24.4%	Products up-to-date

Show rows: 10 1 - 10 of 143

Feed issues multiple at scale (images)

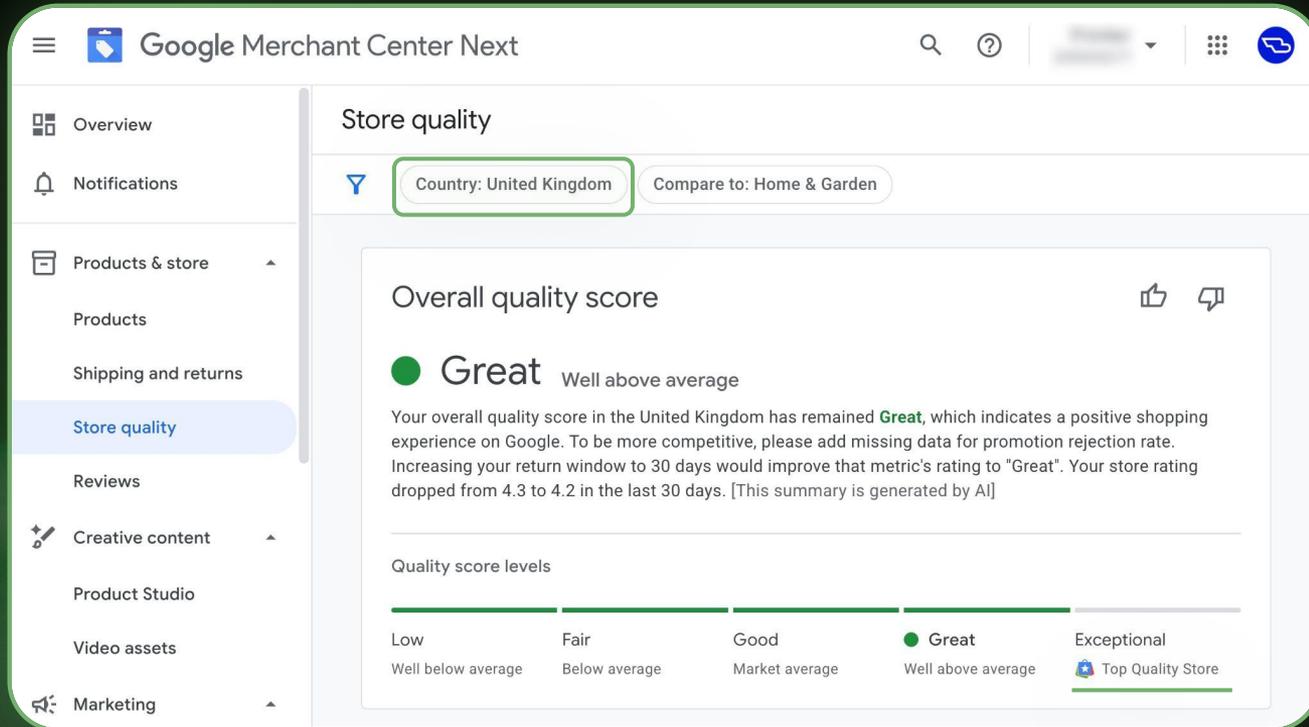


Content API → Merchant API

Note: In conjunction with this launch, we are also announcing the future sunset of the Content API for Shopping. We are committed to making this transition as smooth as possible and will provide access to the Content API until August 18, 2026, after which the Content API will be shut down.

Details: <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/16493611>

GMC Next 'Store Quality' AI Summary



The screenshot shows the Google Merchant Center Next interface. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Overview, Notifications, Products & store (with sub-items: Products, Shipping and returns, Store quality, Reviews), Creative content (with sub-item: Product Studio), Video assets, and Marketing. The main content area is titled 'Store quality' and includes filters for 'Country: United Kingdom' and 'Compare to: Home & Garden'. The 'Overall quality score' section displays a 'Great' rating (Well above average) with a green circle icon. Below this, a text block explains the score: 'Your overall quality score in the United Kingdom has remained Great, which indicates a positive shopping experience on Google. To be more competitive, please add missing data for promotion rejection rate. Increasing your return window to 30 days would improve that metric's rating to "Great". Your store rating dropped from 4.3 to 4.2 in the last 30 days. [This summary is generated by AI]'. A 'Quality score levels' bar at the bottom shows five categories: Low (Well below average), Fair (Below average), Good (Market average), Great (Well above average), and Exceptional (Top Quality Store). A white arrow points to the 'Exceptional' category.

Google Merchant Center Next

Store quality

Country: United Kingdom Compare to: Home & Garden

Overall quality score

Great Well above average

Your overall quality score in the United Kingdom has remained **Great**, which indicates a positive shopping experience on Google. To be more competitive, please add missing data for promotion rejection rate. Increasing your return window to 30 days would improve that metric's rating to "Great". Your store rating dropped from 4.3 to 4.2 in the last 30 days. [This summary is generated by AI]

Quality score levels

Low	Fair	Good	Great	Exceptional
Well below average	Below average	Market average	Well above average	Top Quality Store

GMC Next 'Store Quality' AI Summary

The screenshot shows the Google Merchant Center Next interface. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Overview, Notifications, Products & store (with sub-items: Products, Shipping and returns, Store quality, Reviews), Creative content (with sub-item: Product Studio), Video assets, and Marketing. The main content area is titled 'Store quality' and includes a filter for 'Country: Germany' and a comparison to 'Home & Garden'. The 'Overall quality score' is 'Great', described as 'Well above average'. A text block explains that the score has remained 'Great' and provides advice on improving metrics like promotion rejection rate and return window. Below this is a 'Quality score levels' progress bar with five categories: Low (Well below average), Fair (Below average), Good (Market average), Great (Well above average), and Exceptional (Top tier). The 'Great' category is currently selected.

Google Merchant Center Next

Store quality

Country: Germany Compare to: Home & Garden

Overall quality score

Great Well above average

Your overall quality score in Germany has remained **Great**, which indicates a positive shopping experience on Google. To be more competitive, please add missing data for promotion rejection rate. You can also increase your return window to 30 days to improve that metric's rating to "Great". Great job in reducing your delivery time from 2.64 days to 1.19 days in the last 30 days. [This summary is generated by AI]

Quality score levels

Low	Fair	Good	Great	Exceptional
Well below average	Below average	Market average	Well above average	Top tier

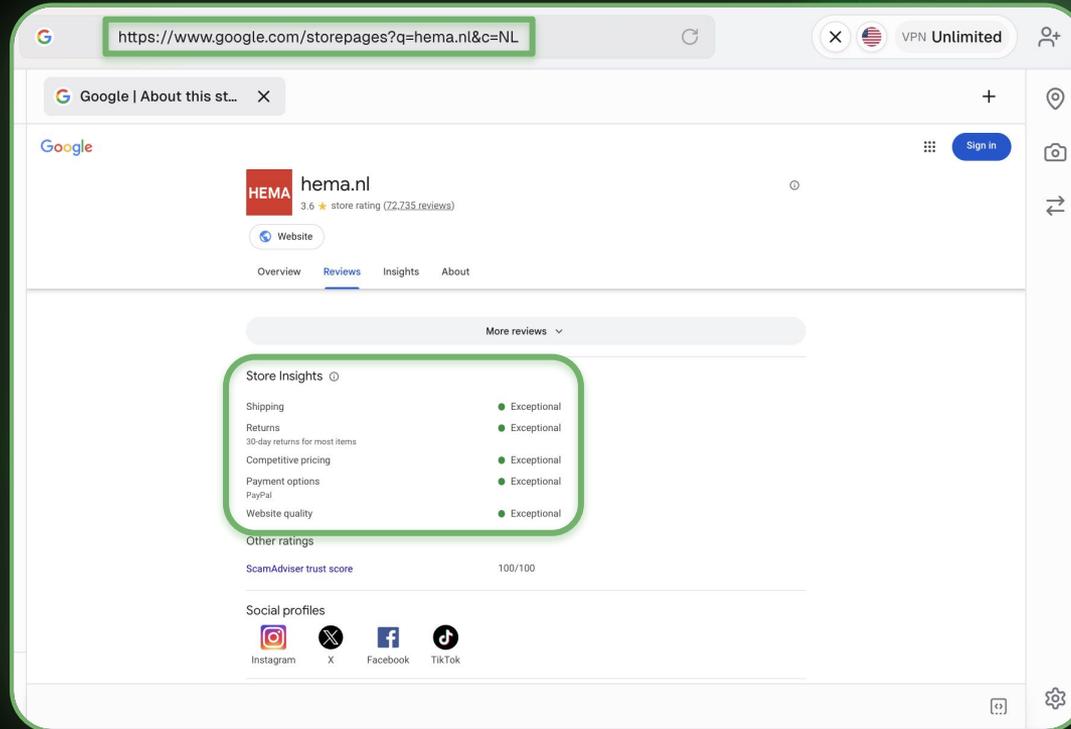
Use StoreRatings.co for Competitor Insights

Store	 Wickes ↗	 Toolstation ↗	 B&Q ↗	 Screwfix ↗	 Homebase ↗
Score (out of 100)	98	98	97	95	87
Top Quality Store	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shipping (quality)	Exceptional £4 1-3 day delivery	Exceptional	Exceptional Free delivery	Exceptional £5 1-day delivery	Exceptional
Returns (quality)	Exceptional 30-day returns for most items	Exceptional 30-day returns for most items	Exceptional 90-day returns for most items	Great 30-day returns for most items	Great 14-day returns for most items
Competitive pricing	Exceptional	Exceptional	Exceptional	Exceptional	Great
Website quality	Exceptional	Exceptional	Great	Exceptional	Exceptional
Wallets	PayPal Google Pay	PayPal Apple Pay	PayPal Google Pay	PayPal Apple Pay	PayPal Klarna
Rating	4.4	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.3
Reviews	468	331,656	42	114	123,079

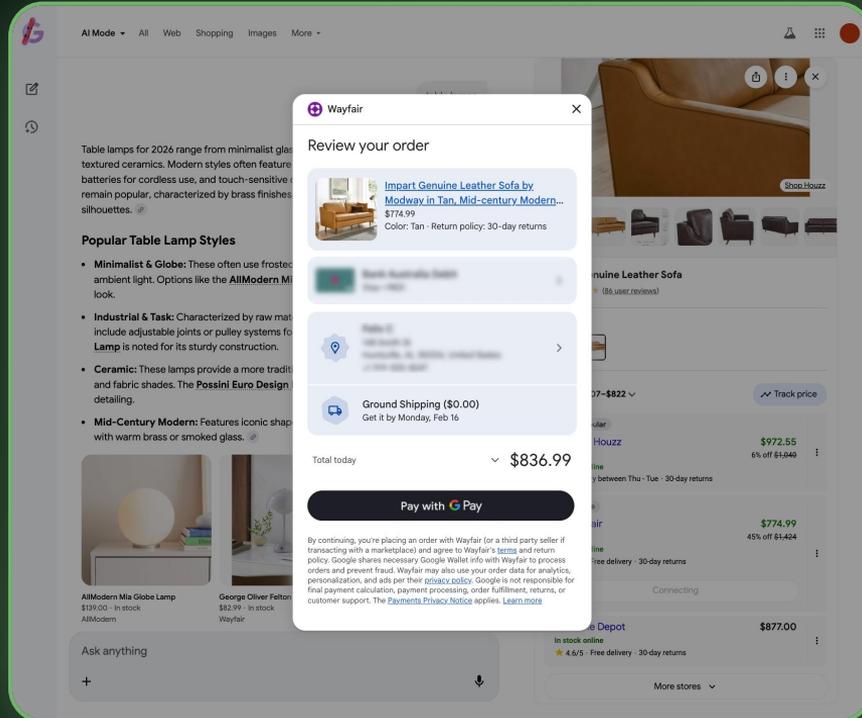
Use StoreRatings.co for Competitor Insights

Store	 Wickes ↗	 Toolstation ↗	 B&Q ↗	 Screwfix ↗	 Homebase ↗
Score (out of 100)	98	98	97	95	87
Top Quality Store	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shipping (quality)	Exceptional £4 1-3 day delivery	Exceptional	Exceptional Free delivery	Exceptional £5 1-day delivery	Exceptional
Returns (quality)	Exceptional 30-day returns for most items	Exceptional 30-day returns for most items	Exceptional 90-day returns for most items	Great 30-day returns for most items	Great 14-day returns for most items
Competitive pricing	Exceptional	Exceptional	Exceptional	Exceptional	Great
Website quality	Exceptional	Exceptional	Great	Exceptional	Exceptional
Wallets	 PayPal  Google Pay	 PayPal  Apple Pay	 PayPal  Google Pay	 PayPal  Apple Pay	 PayPal  Klarna
Rating	4.4	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.3
Reviews	468	331,656	42	114	123,079

Tip: alter your store page URL + use a VPN for the US to see breakdown



Where is it all headed?



- Universal Commerce Protocol (UCP) being tested with Wayfair/Etsy
- From 'buy now' checkout links to 'buy' directly in-SERP
- ChatGPT version (scaling back)
- Business Agent rollout
- GMC Next & product feeds is your ticket to future success

Live Q&A

