SHOPIFY PLUS SEARCH

The Search or Merchandising Triage Sheet

Two questions. Your top 20 queries. One answer per query: is a bad results page a search problem or a merchandising problem? Search each query on your live store, look at the top 12 results, and log your answers below.

QUESTION 1

Does every product in the top 12 match the query?

No: search problem. Fix understanding or relevance.

QUESTION 2 (IF Q1 IS YES)

Are the matching products in the order your business wants?

No: merchandising problem. Add or change a rule.

#	QUERY	Q1 ALL MATCH?	Q2 ORDER RIGHT?	JOB (ROW)	FIX IT IN
1		Y / N	Y / N		
2		Y / N	Y / N		
3		Y / N	Y / N		
4		Y / N	Y / N		
5		Y / N	Y / N		
6		Y / N	Y / N		
7		Y / N	Y / N		
8		Y / N	Y / N		
9		Y / N	Y / N		
10		Y / N	Y / N		

#	QUERY	Q1 ALL MATCH?	Q2 ORDER RIGHT?	JOB (ROW)	FIX IT IN
11		Y / N	Y / N		
12		Y / N	Y / N		
13		Y / N	Y / N		
14		Y / N	Y / N		
15		Y / N	Y / N		
16		Y / N	Y / N		
17		Y / N	Y / N		
18		Y / N	Y / N		
19		Y / N	Y / N		
20		Y / N	Y / N		

Search problems: _____ Overlap: _____ Merchandising problems: _____ Healthy: _____

The key: what you see, and where to fix it

WHAT YOU SEE	JOB (ROW)	FIX IT IN
Zero results for something you sell	1 Understand	Search
Products that don't match in the top results	2 Retrieve and score	Search
“Returns” or “shipping” searches showing products	6 Route	Overlap: redirect
“Men's shirts” landing on a weaker list than the category page	6 Route	Overlap: redirect or category routing
All matches, sold-out styles first	3 Stock weight	Overlap: inventory weight or a demote rule
All matches, the launch on page two	7 and 8 Promote or pin	Merchandising: rule
All matches, but a broad query like “gifts” shows a random mix	4 Rerank	Overlap: intent reranking

The boundary map

SEARCH: ROWS 1 AND 2
1 Understand the query · 2 Retrieve and score relevance

OVERLAP: ROWS 3 TO 6
3 Weight behavior and stock · 4 Rerank by intent · 5 Plain-English guidance · 6 Route to a page

MERCHANDISING: ROWS 7 TO 10
7 Promote or demote · 8 Pin to a position · 9 Hide from search · 10 Choose the filters

Off the map: collection pages have no query, so business rules can lead.

What your result means

Mostly search problems: fix the engine first. Rules built on weak matches need constant upkeep.

Mostly overlap: check stock weighting, redirects, and how broad queries get reranked.

Mostly merchandising problems: rules are your lever. Merchandise only products that already match.

Mostly healthy: re-run after your next big launch or catalog change.

Run it in five steps

1. Pull your top 20 queries, plus any with no results or no clicks.
2. Search each one on your live store; look at the top 12.
3. Answer Question 1. Only ask Question 2 when every product matches.
4. Use the key to name the job that failed and where to fix it.
5. Fix search problems before you add rules.

Want to see the boundary map on your own catalog?

Bring your top search terms to a demo and see which side of the line each one falls on.

Book a demo