

The Five-Query Search Audit

Zero-result rate isn't one problem. It's six mechanically distinct ones. Run these five tests on your live storefront. Mark each cause as active or not.

5 TESTS

6 CAUSES

30 MIN

THE FIVE TESTS

Run these on your storefront

01 **Natural-language test**

INTENT MISS

Run 3 conversational queries a real shopper would type — "outfit for beach wedding," "something casual for office," "gift for new mom." Substitute equivalents for your vertical.

Mark active if 2+ returned zero or irrelevant top results.

02 **Synonym-pair test**

SYNONYM FRAGMENTATION

Pick 10 same-meaning pairs for your catalog (sofa/couch, trainers/sneakers, bandeau/strapless, jumper/sweater). Run both terms separately.

Mark active if 4+ pairs diverge — one returns dozens, the other returns zero.

03 **Metafield test**

METAFIELD GAP

List 10 values that live in product metafields (organic cotton, dishwasher safe, iPhone 15 compatible, mid-century). Search each.

Mark active if 5+ returned far fewer results than products you know carry that value.

04 **Variant test**

VARIANT INVISIBILITY + COMBINED-LISTING TRAP

On your most variant-heavy collection, run 10 variant-specific queries ("red size 8," "navy crew neck," "matte black 12-inch"). If your store uses Shopify Combined Listings, include child-specific terms.

Mark active if 4+ returned zero or wrong variants.

05 **OOS test**

OOS DEAD-END

Pull your top 50 zero-result queries from the last 30 days. Cross-reference with the prior 30 days. Any that succeeded then but fail now = OOS dead-end. No zero-result log in your current stack? That's itself a finding.

Mark active if more than 20% of the 50 succeeded in the prior month.

Your audit grid

Tick the active causes after running the tests.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Intent miss	The engine can't read meaning, only match text
<input type="checkbox"/>	Synonym fragmentation	Shopper vocabulary doesn't match catalog vocabulary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Metafield gap	Searchable attributes exist on products but aren't indexed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Variant invisibility	Color / size / material isn't surfaced from variants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Combined-listing trap	Children of Combined Listings are invisible to filters
<input type="checkbox"/>	OOS dead-end	Matching products exist but are out of stock with no fallback

SCORING

What your grid means

3+ CAUSES **Structural leak, not a tuning problem.** Synonym-list edits and ranking-rule tweaks won't move the number meaningfully.

1-2 CAUSES **Fix the primary leak first.** The smaller ones often resolve as side effects.

0 CAUSES **Try the audit on your weakest-performing collection.** That's where leaks hide.

REMEDIATION

Fix order by speed-to-impact

1 OOS dead-end
Config-only on most stacks. Fastest hit.

2 Metafield gap
Config-only. No engine change.

3 Intent miss
Biggest revenue lever. Requires a semantic engine.

4 Synonym fragmentation
Often disappears as a side effect of #3 done right.

5 Variant invisibility
Depends on your catalog model.

6 Combined-listing trap
Address only if your store uses them heavily.

Want us to run this on your top 100 zero-result queries?

We'll walk through your live search analytics on a 30-minute call, identify which of the six causes are driving them, and show you what the same queries return on a search engine built for Shopify Plus.

[Book a demo →](#)