How to Build Ecommerce Product Pages that Win Sales

10 TIPS TO HELP CPG BRANDS GROW ONLINE

FIELD AGENT®

The *Other* Point of Purchase

Look, it's a shopper. She's doing what shoppers do:

- Exploring the frozen groceries department and discovering several new products
- Carefully inspecting package labels and considering nutrition facts
- Comparing prices and ingredients across several products

Not very long ago, we would have assumed this was describing a shopper *inside a store*. But today, even for high-volume CPG categories like frozen meals, multi-serve beverages, and cleaning goods, **activities like these frequently take place online**.

In fact, more than half of shoppers **(58%) surveyed for Field Agent's annual report, *The State of Digital Grocery*, said they shop online for groceries and/or household consumables**. This compared to 98% who do so in-store.

While in-store shopping is not going away (it's just not), **shopping trends suggest CPG brands should be going all-in on ecommerce**. And that means going all-in on the product detail page (PDP), the point-of-purchase for online sales.

(Of course, even in-store sales often go through a SKU's PDP.)

So how can brands ensure their PDPs are doing what they're supposed to: converting shoppers into buyers?

On the pages to come, we describe several principles to help CPG companies build and manage their product pages. This isn't a technical manual or even a primer on ecommerce. Brands, after all, often rely on ecomm agencies to do the heavy lifting on their PDPs.

This guide, rather, is designed to help brands think strategically, accurately, and opportunistically about online product pages, with direct implications for growing ecommerce sales.

For this, we called in some experts...

Meet the Experts

HEATHER PAUL
Director of Content, OneStone

RYAN MONIGAN
VP of Insights & Strategy, SKU Ninja

At Field Agent, we're fortunate to call Northwest Arkansas home, where we're surrounded by a thriving supplier and agency community serving Walmart and other retailers. We have several neighbors and friends managing ecomm strategy and operations for CPG brands.

For this guide specifically, we relied heavily on two of these friends, both ecommerce and product page experts:

Heather Paul is the director of content at **OneStone**, an agency offering comprehensive ecomm solutions, including strategy, marketing, content, analytics, and supply chain, across retail platforms.

Ryan Monigan is the vice president of insights and strategy at **SKU Ninja**, an ecommerce software developer and solution provider specializing in Walmart ecommerce.

We're grateful to both companies and individuals for contributing to this guide.
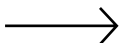
10 PDP Tips for Converting Shoppers into Buyers:

01   No two ecommerce platforms are alike

02   Picture your way to more sales

03   Be better than basic photos

04   Think 'SEO-rich'

05   Carefully balance SEO and engagement

06   Manage the whole portfolio

07   More isn't always better

08   Get 'romantic' in the description

09   Stand out from others selling *your* product

10   Build up your ratings and reviews

If it's happening in retail,
it's happening on

ENDCAPS |&| INSIGHTS

The Walmart Digital Shopper
PRIORITIES, NEEDS, & HABITS

7 SECRETS *for a* **Successful Buyer Meeting**

Gameday Retail
How CPG Brands Can Score with Football Shoppers

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No Two Ecommerce Platforms are Alike

There might be fewer truly universal laws for building PDPs than you might imagine. Why? Because ecommerce platforms—from Amazon to Zales.com—operate differently, and shoppers on them can behave differently, too.

Consider the two largest ecomm platforms in the United States:

- Amazon allows a generous character limit for PDP titles upwards of 200 characters, while Walmart limits titles to 50-70 characters
- Amazon lets brands add additional keywords on the backend (above and beyond the content on the PDP) while Walmart does not

- Amazon allows any supplier or agency to add "enhanced content" (i.e., below-the-fold brand or category-specific copy and images) to their PDPs, whereas Walmart only allows CCPs (connected content providers) to manage enhanced content

Consequently, whether your brand manages its PDPs in-house or through an agency, it's important to appreciate the differences from platform to platform. Ask a PDP content creator about the best way to do something on a product page, and they may well tell you, "It depends."

It depends on the platform.

Picture Your Way to More Sales

We asked 1,100 shoppers to rank five common PDP elements—description, photos, video, reviews, and shipping options—by their influence over online purchase decisions. Which received the most #1 rankings?

At 31%, photos received the highest share of #1 rankings. There's more. Of respondents who made non-grocery, online purchases in the past month, 54% said product images were **extremely important** to these purchases (90% either extremely or very important). Additionally, 75% said product photos were extremely or very important to their online *grocery* purchases.

On ecomm platforms, photos matter. *A lot.*

"When people are browsing pages they'll sometimes stop right at the images," Paul said. "If they're seeing poor quality images or if they're not seeing enough information in those images, they might just skip that product and go on to the next one.

"High-quality images convey you have a high-quality product."

Consequently, brands need to ensure they invest in what Monigan called "high-resolution, well-edited" images. And not just for the PDP.

Because they take up so much space in the search grid, quality photos are also important for *first* getting traffic to your product pages.

Brand Photography Package
by Aisle 9
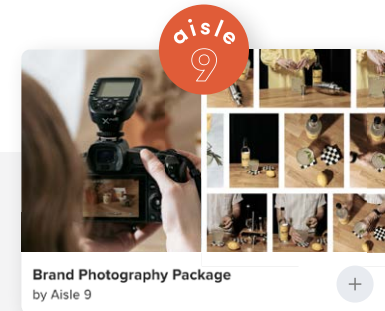
Upgrade your brand imagery with **Custom Brand Photography**

powered by aisle9

Available in the Field Agent Marketplace

SHOP NOW

90% said product images were either extremely or very important to their online purchases

1,100 RESPONDENTS AFTER MAKING NON-GROCERY, ONLINE PURCHASES

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Be Better than Basic Photos

Basic product photos—i.e., an unopened product against a white backdrop—are an unmistakable part of the ecommerce landscape. They're essential. But, photo carousels today offer room for so much more.

For one, shoppers want to see more than the front of your product—they want to see product labels, nutrition facts, relative size, and more. They want to inspect the product from every angle, just like they would in stores.

In a Field Agent survey of 1,100 U.S. adults, 80% agreed photos on PDPs help them make purchases by giving them "a good idea of the relative size of the product," while 75% said photos enable purchases by showing them "the appearance of the product from every angle." In other words, shoppers need more than basic, straight-on photos.

Shoppers also appreciate seeing the product in action. Get this: Of three PDP photo categories, **45% of respondents in our survey said lifestyle photos (showing the product being used by a person)** are more influential over their purchases than basic photos (26%) or "content" photos that show the product being accessed or served but with no person in it (29%).

And that's not to say anything about video, which normally appears at the end of the photo carousel. Because of this location, shoppers may rely less on video for making purchases… but that doesn't mean it's not important.

As Paul related, all things equal, a PDP with video is going to win more sales than a PDP without video. This is especially true for items with working components—"ohhhh, that's how it works."

"The photos whet the appetite," Paul said. "If they're not sold, the video can push them over the edge."

In most cases, basic photos are just no longer enough.

WHICH TYPE OF PDP PHOTO IS MOST LIKELY TO CONVINCE YOU TO BUY A PRODUCT?

29%

45%

26%

● LIFESTYLE   ● BASIC   ● CONTENT
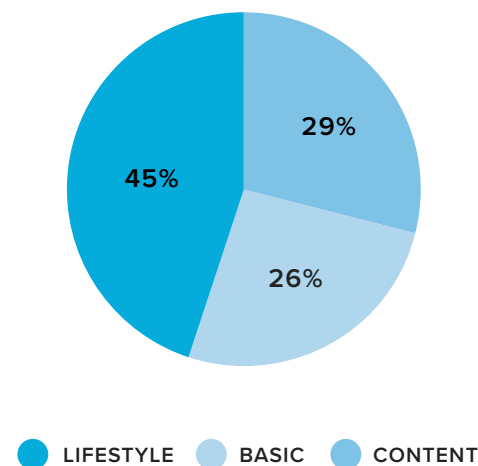
Think 'SEO-Rich'

"Imagine you could go to a grocery store and purchase all the ingredients for a PDP that wins sales, what would be in your shopping cart?"

That's the initial question we posed to Heather Paul. Many of the "ingredients" she rattled off included the term "SEO-rich," as in...

- An SEO-rich title
- SEO-rich bullets
- An SEO-rich description

For brands that want shoppers' attention on ecommerce sites (that's 100% of you), search engine optimization is absolutely crucial.

Understand, the search bar is the go-to destination for online shoppers. **When we surveyed 985 Walmart digital shoppers**, fully 68% said the search bar is generally their first visit on the Walmart website or app—before the department menu, featured/suggested items, or previously purchased items. There wasn't even a close second.

And consider this: Only 27% said they always or often visit the second page of search results on Walmart.com.

In other words, search counts for so much when selling to online shoppers. So much.

Of course, as Paul pointed out, shoppers do search differently on different platforms. SEO tools are available to help brands and their agencies optimize PDPs for search on different sites.

Are You Listed for Walmart OPD?
Available in the Field Agent Marketplace

CHECK MY OPD LISTINGS

TIP NO. 5

Carefully Balance SEO & Engagement

"Content is king," as any digital marketer will tell you. We sometimes wrongly place the emphasis on the platform or channel (including ecommerce) while forgetting that it's really all about the content.

The problem is, you're serving more than one audience with your PDP content. There's the shopper audience *and* the machine audience (specifically, the search engine).

"Creating high-quality content that **appeals to both the shopper** *and* **the search engine** is the best way to boost your items' traffic and sales," said Monigan (emphasis added).

Complicating matters, however, flesh-and-bone shoppers don't consume and interpret content the same way as robots. *Imagine that.*

This means brands and their agencies should be very careful to **balance content for both SEO and shopper engagement**.

"You want bullet points and copy that are not only rich with keywords but easily understood by shoppers," said Paul. "You want to fit in SEO in a way that doesn't make your content clunky."

Several long-tail keywords back-to-back-to-back may play well with search engines, but it's likely to degrade the shopper's trust, Paul added.

Strike a balance that will help your content perform well with shoppers and search engines alike.

What retail problem can we help you solve? 🔍

"Creating high-quality content that appeals to both the shopper and the search engine is the best way to boost your items' traffic and sales."

RYAN MONIGAN, ON CAREFULLY BALANCING SEO & ENGAGEMENT

Manage the *Whole* Portfolio

It's a mistake to think of your individual PDPs as only *individual* PDPs.

If you're a brand selling multiple SKUs across a single retail platform, it's often helpful to manage a single PDP as part of the larger whole. This has been called portfolio management, and it assumes various forms (some with implications for PDPs). For example:

SEO. It's important to optimize content on PDPs so they rank high on search grids. In the spirit of portfolio management, you can identify your highest-ranking items to ensure they stay at the top of searches. One tier down, you can then identify PDPs that aren't top-ranking but could be with the right tactics. Do likewise for each subsequent tier—from high to low ranking—optimizing your PDPs as a complete portfolio.

"As the strategy is implemented, more items get into that top tier, the process is repeated on the next tier, and the portfolio as a whole is in a better place," Monigan said.

Enhanced Content. Many ecomm platforms let brands add enhanced content to their product pages. This is a great opportunity to build up the brand's—not just the individual SKU's—reputation across its entire portfolio. So it's important to think systematically—aka whole portfolio—when creating and managing this enhanced content.

And while these are two prominent applications of portfolio management to PDPs, "thinking whole portfolio" is important in other ways. Ad spend, for instance.

As we pointed out in **The CPG Guidebook for Q4 Success**, especially during high volume seasons, be ready to shift ad spend on and between ecomm platforms as your brand encounters ebbs and flows in its stock levels.

This, too, requires brands to manage individual PDPs as part of a larger portfolio.

More Isn't Always Better

For this tip, consider the bullet points found on many PDPs. You'll find them toward the top of Amazon pages, and they're an important opportunity to articulate product highlights in a compelling yet relatively brief way.

But here, too, there's a tension, and brands must find a balance:

- **Longer bullets** afford greater opportunity for keywords as well as engaging language
- **Shorter bullets** are more readable and skimmable

Some ecomm experts suggest a mid-road approach that enjoys some of these advantages without their full disadvantages.

But just because you *can* make longer bullets, doesn't mean you *should*.

On PDPs, too many bullet points, too many long-tail keywords, or too many product details hinder a shopper's ability to "get in and get out"—to use a brick-and-mortar expression.

Perhaps a quote from Donald Miller is fitting. "People don't buy the best products. They buy the products they can understand the fastest."

None of this is to suggest brands shouldn't take full advantage of the opportunities offered by ecommerce platforms. If you have a chance to add, for instance, enriched content...do it. The alternative leaves money on the table.

Yet do appreciate that effective PDPs are made not only by adding...but occasionally subtracting as well.

Big buyer meeting coming up? *No worries.*

The Buyer Meeting Success Kit

HOW TO LAND (AND KEEP) YOUR PRODUCT ON STORE SHELVES

✓ ADVICE FROM INDUSTRY INSIDERS
✓ BUYER MEETING CHECKLIST
✓ PRODUCT GUIDE FOR SUCCESS

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Get 'Romantic' in the Description

Shoppers are on a particular ecommerce site with one goal: to make their lives better. Though seemingly mundane, every shopping trip—online and in-store—is a journey of self-fulfillment.

And that's no small thing. For PDP content creators, that's an invitation to help shoppers see how a product can add to their lives. An invitation to, as Paul called it, "get romantic with your story."

But some parts of the PDP are better for storytelling than others. In particular, the product description is a great place to ratchet-up the story.

"The description can share some similarities with the bullets," Paul said, "but in the description you have more freedom to show your product's personality and how it's going to enrich someone's life."

Of course, even when you're in storytelling mode, still make room for keywords. But make room for a little romance, too.

After all, shoppers on your PDP are trying to determine if your product will make their lives better. Or whether they should consider another brand.

TIP NO. 9

Stand Out from Others Selling *Your* Product

Wait, what? Selling *my* product? Yep.

"Not many manufacturers are aware this can even happen," Monigan said.

Marketplace vendors may be selling your same SKUs and, frustratingly, eating into your ecomm sales. It's so common, in fact, that SKU Ninja created a tool, Invader Alert, to scrape Walmart.com every day looking for "invader" PDPs selling their clients' products.

Besides reporting these imposters to your retail partner, what else can be done? You can distinguish the content on your PDP to show shoppers *you're* the original. That they're in the right place, the *best* place, to buy the product.

The enhanced content section is an ideal place to prove you're king of the hill for selling your brand and your category.

As Paul explained, "Enhanced content is more personalized and manicured, usually focused more so on the brand at-large or the product category rather than the individual item." And it's here, perhaps better than anywhere else, you can separate your PDPs from impostors and other-rans.

"Enhanced content signals that the brand believes enough in their product that they're willing to invest in that part of the page," Paul said. "It builds legitimacy and trust."

The enhanced content section (aka A+ content and enriched content) is also the place to showcase your brand and offerings across your item pages—to display all your sizes, flavors, uses, and so on.

Make full use of it.
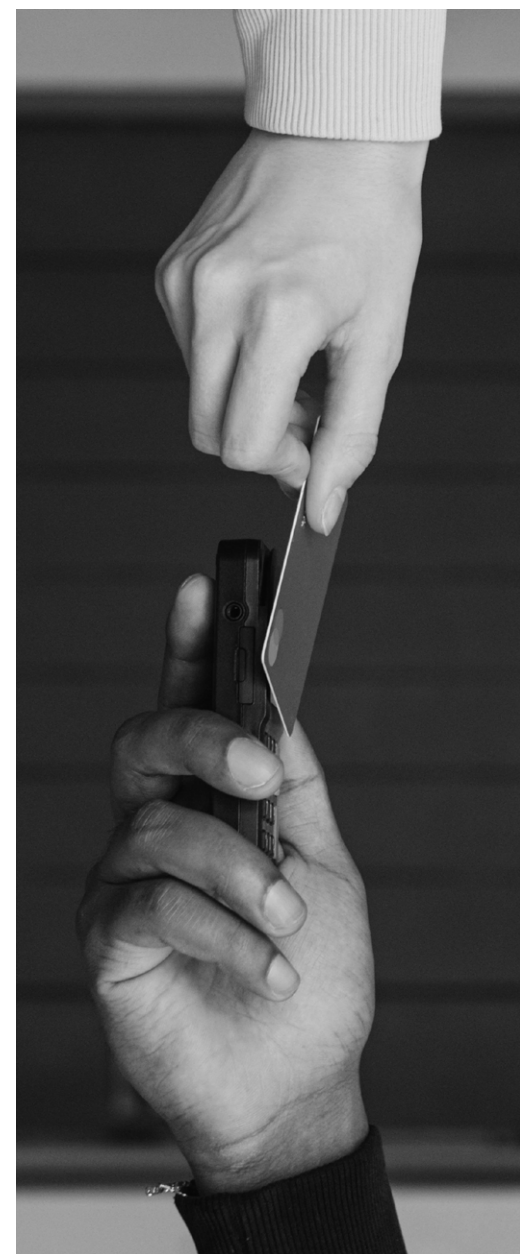
"Enhanced content signals that the brand believes enough in their product that they're willing to invest in that part of the page. It builds legitimacy and trust."

HEATHER PAUL, ON STAND OUT FROM OTHERS SELLING YOUR PRODUCT

Build Up Your Ratings and Reviews

Online ratings and reviews play a pivotal role in many ecommerce (and in-store) purchase decisions. **One Field Agent survey** found that 94% of surveyed shoppers read online ratings and reviews prior to making purchases.

And ratings and reviews aren't just coveted by purchase-minded shoppers. They're also coveted by retail partners, who increasingly expect brands to proactively furnish their PDPs with sufficient numbers of reviews.

Naturally, positive reviews grease the way to sales. They answer shoppers' questions and help them overcome reservations.

But don't miss the silver lining in negative reviews. That's right, in *negative* reviews.

When several negative reviews form around a particular complaint, brands and their ecomm agencies can reverse engineer their PDP content to address the issue. This action alone can improve customer satisfaction and even stave off more negative reviews.

Too many negative reviews, after all, might suggest your content is lending itself to misunderstandings or unrealistic expectations among shoppers. PDP content, therefore, should be clear, realistic, and, ultimately, contribute to greater customer satisfaction (and more positive reviews).

But it all begins with content.

For better or worse, ratings and reviews are essential to ecommerce success.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Why wait for reviews?

**Ratings & Reviews by
Field Agent are the fastest
way to authentic reviews**

VISIT THE MARKETPLACE

CHECKLIST

The Brand's Product Page Checklist

There's a lot—much more than readily meets the eye—that goes into a good ecommerce product detail page (PDP). So much that brands often rely on ecomm agencies to manage their PDPs.

So, what follows isn't intended to be a comprehensive checklist on the ins-and-outs of PDPs.

Rather, here are simply several things you, as a CPG representative, need to be aware of when having conversations about your brand's product pages.
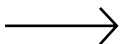
☐ **ECOMM STRATEGY**

PDPs don't live in isolation. They're often part of a larger portfolio, and they should be part of a larger ecomm strategy. Don't rush into PDP development without first establishing a broader ecomm plan.

☐ **SEO-RICH TITLE**

It's at the very top of the PDP, and it carries a lot of SEO weight. Your title has to do its part in landing your SKU high in the search grid. But the number of characters permitted can vary greatly by ecomm platform.

☐ **SEO-RICH DESCRIPTION**

The product description is yet one more place to stand out for search engines. But it's also a good place to stand out for shoppers by showing more of your item's "personality."

☐ **PLATFORM DIFFERENCES**

No two ecomm platforms are alike. So whether you're building and managing PDPs in-house or working with an ecomm agency, make sure you understand there are differences across platforms.

☐ **SEO-RICH BULLETS**

The bullets enjoy some prominent real estate on Amazon product pages in particular. Length is a tension with bullets—shorter can mean greater readability, while longer can mean more keywords and SEO credit.

☐ **ENGAGING COPY**

You're not just writing for search engines. You're also writing for purchase-minded, flesh-and-bone shoppers. So make sure your copy also resonates with the human audience. Be engaging.

☐ **HIGH-QUALITY BASIC PHOTOS**

Basic product photos against a white backdrop are a mainstay of PDPs. Due to their prominent position on both the product listing and product detail pages, they should be high-quality, high-resolution photos.

☐ **PRODUCT VIDEO**

Video is especially important for items with "working parts." Shoppers may be less reliant on video since it often comes at the end of a carousel, but video is increasingly a critical element for ecomm sales.

☐ **RATINGS AND REVIEWS**

Ratings and reviews are a must-have for product pages, not just a nice-to-have. Shoppers and retailers alike expect PDPs to be furnished with an adequate number of ratings and reviews.

☐ **HIGH-QUALITY SECONDARY IMAGERY**

Basic product photos are rarely enough anymore. Depending on the category, shoppers also want to see lifestyle photos, CAD drawings, and other secondary imagery. They make a huge difference.

☐ **BRAND-BUILDING "ENHANCED CONTENT"**

Most PDP content is focused on a specific SKU. But the enhanced/enriched content area is a place to elevate an entire brand or portfolio, and to demonstrate you're the best seller in the category.

☐ **A GOOD ECOMMERCE AGENCY**

Frankly, it takes a lot of expertise and work to build, optimize, and manage PDPs. Too much for many brands. So having a dedicated ecomm agency is generally a smart investment for CPG companies.

Product Pages that
Pack a Punch

From top to bottom, it takes the right inputs to build product pages that convert shoppers into buyers.

The Field Agent Marketplace features several products, including authentic ratings and reviews and professional brand photography, that can help you take your PDPs to the next level. And best of all, you can do it with just a few clicks.

The Field Agent Marketplace.
For product pages that pack a punch.

VISIT THE MARKETPLACE →

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