

Why is SEO a Web Merchandisers job?

By Deborah M. Collier



Effective Web Merchandising is an essential ingredient of a successful online store. It is the science and art of merchandising products on a web site so that optimal sales are achieved. So why is search engine optimisation an essential part of this role?

Deborah Collier, The Certificate in Online Business, explains how businesses and web selling teams can maximise their web merchandisers potential and reduce costs.

A Web Merchandiser is responsible for presenting products in an e-commerce store in a way that maximises sales. Their role not only includes the presentation of the product itself to entice visitors to buy, but also the appropriate categorisation of the product and cross-selling with other products. This sales discipline takes learning from both in-store and online expertise.

What skills do Web Merchandisers have?

Web Product Merchandisers are salesmen and women. They are not 'techies' or webmasters. They are skilled and trained in online selling, and may even be hired from a retailers shop floor or retail merchandising team.



What about SEO?

SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), is the art of optimising a web page so that it appears as high in search engine as possible. For web merchandisers the product, category and sub-category pages are relevant. SEO not only includes defining the search terms that expected customers will look for in the search engines to find a product or category page, but also the text that appears for that page in the search engine results. See the below search engine result example:

[Nike Store UK. Nike Trainers, Clothing & Sports Equipment.](http://store.nike.com/gb/en_gb/)
store.nike.com/gb/en_gb/

Shop for **Nike trainers**, clothing & gear at the official Nike Store. Get the latest boots, apparel, and accessories direct at Nike.com.

[Men](#) - [Women](#) - [Nike clearance](#) - [Color option](#)

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SEO also includes writing text that appears on your web site page (the content), in a search engine optimised way. Web content writers and marketers are tasked with balancing the art of SEO and online customer engagement. Web merchandisers equipped with SEO web writing skills, are also responsible for delivering this balance to e-commerce store category and product pages.

What's happening today and why is this bad practice?

Even some of the largest and most respected online retailers waste time and money on web merchandising. Lets look at a typical process:

The copywriter writes the text for the product they want to merchandise, then an SEO specialist search engine optimises that text. Alternatively, the SEO Specialist provides the SEO keywords and the copywriter employs those words in the text. Next the Web Merchandiser takes this text and adds it to their new product page.

This scenario incorporates three people to do a job, which could be done by one person, and can potentially be a huge waste of money and time. Lets look at the steps:

- Step 1: Product identified and all details known about product noted
- Step 2: Search engine keywords identified (The words that visitors search for in search engines such as Google, when they look for this product)
- Step 3: Copywriters write the text employing the keywords effectively
- Step 4: Web Merchandiser creates the new online product page, adding the text about the product, and employing the keywords in the specialist SEO fields (called Search Engine Meta Data fields), as well as other elements that help boost search engine ranking. They add the appropriate image and pricing and other elements to help sell the product, as well as optimal cross-selling of other products.

Why should Web Merchandisers SEO?

A Web Merchandiser should be responsible for the SEO and Copywriting of their products, not only because it saves time, but also because they know best how to sell their product.

Contrary to popular belief SEO is not 'rocket science'! I've taught many marketers, web merchandisers and business owners, even doctors running their own web sites, to search engine optimise their own web sites and products and it works.

Good writing is an art of course, but why not hire web merchandisers with the skill, or develop their web copywriting and SEO skills?

Let's not be naive however about SEO, there is a place for SEO specialists, particularly when you don't achieve a high ranking for a product. However, even with good Search Engine Optimisation, you may not achieve a high-ranking, simply because competition is too high, or because you do not have enough visitors or links to that product page from other web sites. So no matter what you do, with some products you will not win on SEO. So you do need to

consider another marketing tactic for some products. At least by ensuring your web products are search engine optimised in the most cost-effective way, you are one big step ahead.

Deborah M. Collier

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Deborah is the founder of the Certificate in Online Business™ (COB) series of globally-recognised industry qualifications, which were established in 2008. She developed the reputation of the programs among well-known brands gaining testimonials from Directors and managers at government organisations and leading companies such as Mars, Schneider Electric, House of Fraser and Procter & Gamble. Deborah leads the strategic direction of the training programs and company. In addition, she oversees marketing, partnerships and licensing.



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