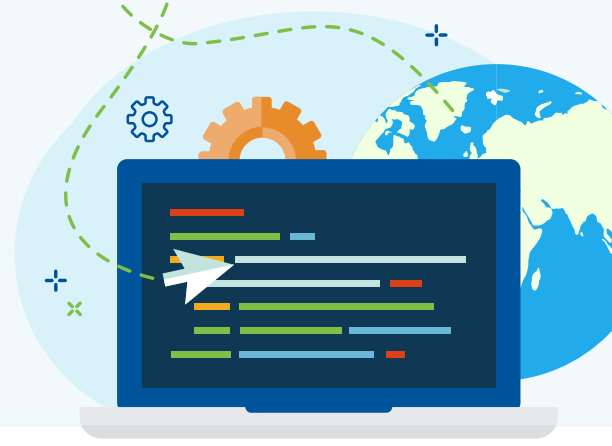


# Taking Your Amazon SEO to the Next Level: Mission Critical



You have probably seen the remarkable studies showing that over 50% of product searches begin on Amazon, making the retailer one of the top five largest *search engines* in terms of annual volume. And you also probably have a clear sense that the events of 2020 have dramatically accelerated the shift to online retail, in a way that feels semi-permanent (though time will tell). Finally, we bet you accept the notion that SEO is a baseline skill for the modern organization. All of these factors underscore how critically important online discovery is to the health of any business – book publishing especially.

Google's primary goal is to surface relevant sites and pages, so they can serve effective ads against user queries. Meanwhile, Amazon's search engine is slightly younger and is aimed toward different outcomes, such as surfacing the right products against consumer searches – which often equates to products users will buy.

Increased volume, competition and sophistication has resulted in significant changes to how products can 'win' on Amazon. This represents both a risk and opportunity for publishing organizations.

**In this overview, we'll present three key points:**

- 1 Understanding Amazon's search priorities requires a relentless focus on the consumer
- 2 Publishers must embrace best practices in product attributes, as well as how products are promoted
- 3 Knowing which books will benefit from optimization and responding quickly can drive significant incremental sales growth across your list



Since that's quite a lot to cover in just a few pages, [watch our January 21st free webinar](#) where we explored more about these trends and covered tactical ways to improve discovery and conversion.

## Understanding Amazon's Search Priorities Requires a Relentless Focus on the Consumer

Here is how to understand how Amazon prioritizes search results: customer obsession. This is why Amazon's search algorithm focuses on two areas, which work together and are of equal importance.

- 1 Semantic matching: what is the intent of the customer's search, and how is that informed by what other consumers are searching for? i.e., what is relevant, and what of those relevant options is popular?
- 2 Conversion to sale: when the match is perfect, a sale follows. A product's conversion to sale is the signal to Amazon they've delighted you by finding you a product you'll love.

We can't overstate enough the two elements must work holistically. If you rank for the popular term "Barack Obama," but your book's really about "American political history?" it won't take Amazon long to figure out consumers aren't buying when they were looking for something else. Sending a lot of traffic to a page that won't convert is a strategy that will ultimately result in low rankings.

Have a book with a few awesome consumer reviews and ratings, a great price, and no one knows it's there? You won't climb the ranks. You've got to drive relevant traffic its way. In short: promote it.

The sales-to-pageview ratio matters, a lot, to Amazon. When you hold or improve that ratio as volume increases, the algorithm's interest is triggered to put your title in front of potential customers. Everyone wins: you sell more books, Amazon has more sales, and the customer gets a great read.

## **Publishers Must Embrace Best Practices in How Titles Are DESCRIBED and PROMOTED**

There are clear pathways for structuring book information and positioning within the online retail catalog that will increase discoverability. These should be well-engrained by now.

- Title, sub-title, series description
- Off-page keywords
- A compelling offer
- Product description
- Category selection

One happy trend we've noticed is publishers have embraced the idea that frequent optimization pays dividends. Consumer behavior changes – seasonally and over time. For example, in 2020, a book about the 1918 flu pandemic became something else entirely, relevant to multiple new audiences interested in various aspects of pandemics – not just medical history. Tracking and responding to these shifts and spikes in demand will spur sales growth, even deep in the backlist.

### **Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond: Trends**

As competition and volume heat up, you can and will benefit from being more active in driving demand to well-positioned, relevant, timely titles. One of the most effective and budget-friendly ways is by utilizing keywords. A key shift we see today is the use of keywords organically (in your product descriptions, off-page keywords on Amazon or title/sub-title) *in combination with* the use of keywords in paid campaigns.

A successful keyword strategy relies on understanding both volume and search competition, with a focused eye on your goal. What terms are you trying to rank for? Does that term have enough interest (search volume) to be worthwhile? Is that term so popular that you'll never break through the noise? You want the set of keywords that reaches the broadest possible group of relevant potential buyers.

The best part about leaning on keywords as a key part of your digital strategy is technology has made it possible to see, interpret and act on these opportunities, without a lot of spend or effort.

### **It's important to know which books will benefit from optimization, and respond quickly**

Since Amazon rewards positive velocity, knowing which titles already have momentum is key. Luckily, technology has also made it possible to track large sets of consumer demand signals, at scale. This makes it easier for you to focus on individual strategies for amplifying momentum: everything from integrated marketing campaigns, to modest social + keyword campaigns, to making sure that product metadata is refreshed. Like all SEO strategies, deciding which levers work best for your organization and where to spend your effort is critical. But probably most critical is knowing which titles will benefit the most at any given time.

### **In Summary**

The events of 2020 have only accelerated the need for you to have solid, data-driven techniques for optimizing your products for online sale. This is good news for you, as incremental sales growth can come from a long tail of titles across the front- and backlist.

## **Watch the Free Webinar**

On January 21st we hosted a free webinar that explored why keywords are so powerful, Amazon SEO best practices, and how to select the "best" keywords for a given title.

[Watch Now](#)

