PRODUCT DISCOVERABILITY ON AMAZON
INCREASING SESSIONS FOR YOUR AMAZON MARKETPLACE LISTINGS

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TO OUR READERS,

At CPC Strategy our goal is to make the Retail Search world easy to navigate for retailers. Imagine us as your Google Maps- charting the Retail Search world and giving detailed directions. We’re here to help you get there.

If at any time you have questions-reach out to contact@cpcstrategy.com.

Sincerely,

Rick Backus | Co-Founder, CEO
INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Amazon is a sales channel that needs no introduction. Whether you’re a product brand or a retailer, you’ve consciously made the decision to either shun or embrace Amazon as a player in your overall ecommerce strategy. The reality is that if you’re a product retailer in 2014-15, there is no scenario where Amazon, as both the sales channel and the retailer, doesn’t affect your ecommerce success.

As a third-party Amazon seller, you can think about Marketplace Strategy (as the sales channel) in two ways:

- **Product Discoverability**
- **Product Buyability**

These two pillars (and their inevitable overlap) should define your Marketplace strategy and are the keys to approaching the Marketplace in a more sophisticated and controllable way.

Let’s apply some definitions first.
DISCOVERABILITY

The ability for a product listing to be found on Amazon. From a consumer’s point of view, Amazon is essentially seller agnostic, focusing SERPs on products rather than the sellers of those products. As a third-party seller of a given product, you have an incentive to increase the overall number of sessions to a product detail page provided that you’re in a good position to win the sale for that product. To relate it more to traditional product ad channels, think driving traffic.

BUYABILITY

Buyability can refer to two highly overlapping concepts:

- A reseller’s ability to influence their Buy Box ownership percentage
- The factors that influence the overall conversion rate of a product page. To relate it to more traditional product ad channels, think converting traffic

To put Buyability in better context, let’s say you sell a SwissGear 10-person tent and that its product detail page received 100 overall orders last month. Your goal will be to have the highest share of those 100 orders as possible and once a high share is reached, you can shift strategy towards increasing the overall number of orders.
Increasing the overall number of orders will come through:

- **Improving the overall conversion of the product detail page with optimized product content**
- **Increasing the number of sessions to that detail page**

This latter concept is the strategy behind product Discoverability. This white paper will dive into the **strategy behind product Discoverability** and the different levers involved in **increasing sessions**.

By understanding the factors that influence these two sides of the coin – driving shoppers to product pages (Discoverability) and converting those shoppers once they reach the product detail pages (Buyability) – a third-party seller can start to sculpt their overall Amazon strategy and **decide when and where it makes sense to focus their resources on Discoverability over Buyability** (and vice versa).
CHAPTER 1

HOW MANIPULATING PRODUCT DISCOVERABILITY FITS INTO YOUR AMAZON STRATEGY
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At the core of “Amazon optimization,” the concepts of product Discoverability and Buyability are not mutually exclusive – there is actually strong interplay between them. Think of it as a virtuous cycle. Considering sales performance history is one of the strongest drivers of listing Discoverability (more on this later), you can start to see how a product – let’s say a CamelBak water bottle – which drives a lot of sales will start to rank higher on a SERP. So by pulling levers to accelerate the Buyability of a product, the product rises higher in search results, thus increasing its Discoverability.

Let’s say someone searches for “water bottle.” A CamelBak water bottle which shows up higher in keyword searches is also more likely to be clicked and purchased, which then continues to drive it higher in search rankings (thus continuing the cycle).

This is intuitive because if you think of Amazon as a platform whose primary goal is to drive sales regardless of which seller it’s from, then of course they would want to promote the products which have proven to sell the best.
Many Amazon sellers focus on the infamous Buy Box, a central aspect of Buyability, but sometimes it may not make sense for you to invest resources into Buy Box ownership. There are essentially 2 unique scenarios where it makes sense to focus your attention and resources on increasing the Discoverability of your products.

In either case, your top priority should be to drive more sessions to a given product detail page because you’re confident that you will win the sale for a converting session. Let’s dive into each scenario:

**HIGH BUY BOX OWNERSHIP SHARE**

There are 2 big things to note here. One, if you have ample historical performance data for your catalog, then you can and should start to implement different strategies for various segments of your catalog. How you segment your catalog is completely up
to you, but one route is to segment your catalog by Buy Box ownership share (ex. bucket the products with share between 0-33%, 34-66%, 67-90%, and 90-100%).

In this case, by identifying the segment of products where Buy Box ownership is very high, you can start to shift strategy towards Discoverability. A given ASIN on Amazon is typically going to have X amount of sessions with Y amount of orders, regardless of the seller. If you’re already in a position where you’re winning the Buy Box the vast majority of the time (ex. winning 98% of Y orders), then the key now is to increase X – the number of overall sessions to the listing. This strategy will allow you to maximize profitability for a product that’s probably already performing well for you.

**LOW COMPETITION FOR A GIVEN ASIN**
If you’re the only seller or one of very few for an ASIN, odds are that you have very high Buy Box ownership and are converting on many of the sessions for that product page. Again, this is a scenario where you can start to shift strategy towards driving more exposure for that product page because you’re probably going to win the sale here. This is often the case for very unique products, perhaps those for which you are the manufacturer and other low competition-type products.

With an understanding of the different scenarios where it makes sense to focus on Discoverability, you can now shift your attention to the different levers that influence product Discoverability on the Marketplace. **Think of this as “Amazon SEO.”**

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**HARNESS THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE AMAZON MARKETPLACE**

**HAVE AN AMAZON ADVISOR AUDIT YOUR MARKETPLACE CAMPAIGNS**

Schedule A Meeting With An Amazon Advisor

(Don’t leave money on the table)
CHAPTER 2

FACTORS INFLUENCING PRODUCT DISCOVERABILITY
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SALES PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Amazon gets a piece of every sale made on the Marketplace, so it’s in the business to drive conversions - regardless of who the seller is. It’s intuitive that they would want to point shoppers to the products which are most likely to sell. The two most influential
factors in determining a product’s rank on a given Amazon SERP are sales performance history and relevance. Any Amazon SERP will be a portrait of the dichotomy between sales performance and relevance, all with the end goal of showing the products that are most likely to convert.

In the above query for “mountain bike”, we see the influence of the former factor because the top spot is actually biking gloves, not an actual bike. Closer inspections of the top two results show that the gloves are actually ranked the 6,755th best seller in Sports & Outdoors while the Hyper Havoc Full Suspension Men’s Mountain Bike is the 18,510th best seller in Sports & Outdoors.

**RELEVANCE**

The other central determinant in Amazon SERP rankings is relevance. In terms of how a reseller can manipulate relevance, we’re essentially talking about your *product content submission strategy*.

Defining your product content submission strategy is one of the more perplexing and irritable aspects of Amazon selling. In a given scenario, you may be providing the most optimized product description and features for a product detail page where you’re not even the Buy Box owner, essentially implementing conversion rate optimization best practices for your competitor in the process.
As a seller, the challenge will be to identify areas of your catalog where you should put no extra effort into improving your current product data and where it makes sense to invest resources into making your product content as robust as possible.

It should be noted that Amazon content ownership is shared and there is no guarantee your data will be surfaced on an Amazon detail page. Amazon algorithmically pulls what it deems to be the best content to display in order for that product to sell. One slight exception to this is for brands that are part of the Amazon Brand Registry. This program allows sellers who manufacture or sell their own branded products to have higher authority over your products’ listing content.

The following aspects of product data are also influencers of product Buyability. In addition to making your products more discoverable, they also support the end goal of optimizing the conversion rate of the product detail page in general (agnostic of the seller). For this reason, it is important to know that you should probably focus on enhancing product data for detail pages where your Buy Box ownership is high or you’re the only seller.

Let’s dive into the key aspects of product content.
Product title is the most heavily weighted aspect of product content. The interesting thing about Amazon product titles is that they’re “flexible.” You can’t simply take the optimized product data you’re sending for Google Shopping, send it to Amazon, and call it a day. “Product title optimization” takes a different shape on Amazon, allowing sellers to include more relevant product information and name variations in the title.

The product detail page above surfaced from a search for a “snowboard hat.” Product title is particularly important when you’re the lone seller or there’s low competition. Amazon typically favors the shown title to the originator of a product detail page.
There are several Amazon-recommended best practices for title content. The table below provides a skeleton of how your title should flow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand &amp; Description</td>
<td>Laura Ashley Pillow Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Line</td>
<td>Sophia Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material or Key Ingredient</td>
<td>300-Thread-Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Set of 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coffee maker on the next page follows a solid Amazon product title structure (Brand > MPN > Attribute > Product > Attribute). Of course, the ideal structure will vary by vertical (ex. MPN is important for electronics but not necessarily for apparel), and Amazon does provide vertical-specific product title best practices in Seller Central.
Another important note about product titles is the character limitations. If you’re uploading individual products manually, then your product titles will be restricted to 250 characters. However, if you’re uploading products via a bulk upload (ex. like through your Mercent platform), then you can submit product titles up to 500 characters. This is a huge opportunity that you’ll want to take advantage of, and in fact the Mr. Coffee product title above could be making better use of the space and including more information about the product.

**FEATURES**

There are 5 columns in an Amazon inventory file for Product Features. Again, your decision to include this information should be strategic, based on how confident you are that including this information will influence the sale in your favor.
DESCRIPTION

Product description is a heavily weighted product content field when it comes to enhancing relevance for search. Include every single relevant product detail, just as
you would for your own ecommerce site’s product page. Product descriptions give sellers the unique opportunity to include a lot of sales and marketing lingo that have the advantage of being indexed for search. The beanie product description above actually does a rather poor job of making using of this space. This ice machine product description is robust and includes many potential search terms.

Product Description

The Mr. Freeze Portable Clear Ice Maker takes ice seriously and is the only ice maker of its kind that lets you make crystal clear ice cubes in only 30 minutes. It’s perfect for the home bartender who loves to mix drinks for guests or for the “occasional nightcap.” With the Mr. Freeze Portable Clear Ice Maker, it’s always “Happy Hour.” It’s portable convenience makes it a necessity at parties, wet bars, recreation and game rooms, and even boats and RV’s. Choose between large and small cube size settings and you’ll be elated by the quality, clarity and refreshing taste of the ice cubes every time! No more funny smelling freezer ice, chattered ice trays, or cloudy opaque ice with holes in the middle! Sit back and relax with a glass of iced tea or an intoxicating mixed drink, these ice cubes are for the serious drinker. The best cocktail bars have crystal clear, solid, hard ice cubes that are as clear as moonshine. So should you.

Customers Who Viewed This Item Also Viewed

[Image of related products]

HAVEN'T HARNES THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE AMAZON MARKETPLACE??

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CATEGORY-SPECIFIC DATA ATTRIBUTES

Depending on the category, there are optional fields you can choose to populate to provide more information about the product. From a consumer standpoint, these attributes become filterable if he/she searches the products via breadcrumbs (following Amazon’s product category hierarchy). They will impact product Discoverability via these filters as well as Buyability via the CRO best practice of maximizing the amount of product details on a product page.
**SEARCH KEYWORDS**

Amazon is unique in that they allow sellers to provide a list of keywords/search terms to better enhance product Discoverability. They can be entered in 3 ways:

- Manually via Seller Central (Inventory > Manage Inventory > Actions > Edit Details > Keywords)
- A bulk upload via an .xml file (automatic submission)
- A bulk upload via a .csv file (yourself)

Consumers never see these search terms, they simply help guide Amazon towards your products.

Search keywords present a good opportunity for resellers to get creative with how consumers might be searching their products.
When entering search term keywords, keep in mind that you should not use the precious 250 characters to include misspellings, repeat words, or punctuation. Do use this space to include alternate spellings (ex. bookcases + book cases), related search terms, and creative, out-of-the-box queries (ex. searching for horn rimmed glasses with “nerd glasses”).

Order does matter for these keywords and if you’re used to keyword strategy for traditional PPC, think of these as phrase match keywords.
PRODUCT IMAGES

Including a high-quality, zoom-able product image is a standard conversion rate optimization best practice regardless of the ecommerce channel. How your product is represented via the image will influence click-throughs on the SERP and ultimately, its performance on the product detail page.

Including a main image URL is required but any alternate image URLs optional. It’s recommended to not invest time into adding alternate images if you don’t have a high buy box ownership share.
MANUFACTURER PART NUMBER (MPN)

Manufacturer Part Number, or MPN, is an optional field in an Amazon inventory file and is particularly relevant if you sell parts or electronics. Consumers will search by MPN to find specific parts, so of course you must communicate this part number to Amazon if you hope to improve your listing relevance. The sellers below have included the MPN in the product title for iteration.
BRAND

Brand is a required field, but it plays a large role in Amazon search. **Shoppers will often filter by brand on the SERP** and it is a big influencer of product relevancy for branded searches. For this reason, it’s important to include brand in the product title and description fields as well.

When adding brand name in your inventory file, use the most common brand name that shoppers will recognize. For example, consider adding Nike instead of Nike Air.
When it comes to improving relevancy, identify where it makes sense to invest resources in product data optimization so that you improve conversion rates for only the product detail pages where your Buy Box ownership share is high.

**PRODUCT REVIEWS**

Product Reviews are a factor in driving product Discoverability via search filters, however, they’re more so an integral piece in driving product Buyability, enhancing the overall conversion rate of the product detail page. Amazon shoppers will leverage the platform’s large customer review pile by filtering search results for products rated 3 or 4 stars and above.

Consider investing in acquiring product feedback if you’re the sole seller of that product or one of few to improve SERP visibility.
SPONSORED PRODUCTS

Recently tested in new ad layouts and positions, Sponsored Products is Amazon’s inter-Marketplace PPC program. Only sellers who currently own a Buy Box and are selling in the available product categories are eligible for Sponsored Products. The ads channel shoppers to the product’s detail page, where the advertiser is the current Buy Box owner. They’ve been seen on the right side of organic SERP listings, the bottom of a SERP, as well as by the Buy Box on a product detail page.

Consider using Sponsored Products for new ASINs – essentially listings with no sales history OR those with high conversions and low sessions. Sponsored Products can be an effective acceleration tool for enhancing product Discoverability and, consequentially, quickly accumulating sales performance history.
FULFILLMENT METHOD

How you choose to fulfill your products on Amazon is a huge influence on both product Discoverability and Buyability. In the realm of Discoverability, fulfillment method – whether it’s **Fulfillment by Merchant** (FBM) or **Fulfillment by Amazon** (FBA) – will affect your SERP exposure via filters.

Probably the most significant appeal of FBA is a product’s eligibility for Prime, and you can imagine that many Prime customers (all 20+ million of them) will instinctively filter results by Prime, the most prominently placed filter on Amazon.

Understand which parts of your catalog it makes sense to FBA and which products to FBM based on your margins, Buy Box ownership share, and relative competition.
LANDED PRICE

Landed price is equal to the product price and shipping & handling. It directly affects your search rankings as well as indirectly via filtering and sorting. Since landed price is also one of the most influential Buy Box ownership factors, it makes sense to see that a product that is well-priced and purchased often will receive higher rankings.

Pricing is a huge aspect of strategic Amazon selling, and so a reseller may have to make some sacrifices or get creative when it comes to price.

If you’re fulfilling the product yourself, consider baking shipping & handling costs into your overall product price. The perception of value is higher when shipping is preceded by FREE.
INVENTORY QUANTITY

For a reseller who is the only seller of a given ASIN, Amazon will still display that ASIN on a SERP but will actually bump it down search rankings (provided it’s just temporarily unavailable). This is intuitive because Amazon is going to want to highlight products that can actually be bought.

When it comes to Discoverability (and of course Buyability as well), stay on top of your inventory count - especially if you’re FBA – in order to maintain SERP ranking. You’ll need to plan several days in advance to account for the time it takes for you to submit a new batch of inventory to Amazon.

Our next white paper, **Product Buyability on Amazon**, will transfer the analysis from the SERP to the actual product detail page. It’s here where the battle for Buy Box ownership takes place. We’ll dive into the factors that influence the Buy Box and how you should focus your overall Amazon strategy around product Buyability.
MAXIMIZE YOUR REVENUE ON THE AMAZON MARKETPLACE

In order to harness the full potential of the Amazon marketplace you need to understand the levers that drive performance. By working with a dedicated Amazon Advisor at CPC Strategy, you will optimize your channel profitability and execute an Amazon specific strategy with confidence. Your trusted Amazon Advisor will lead you to growth on the marketplace based on the needs and objectives of your business. We have the Amazon experience to produce results.

| Increase Revenue on Amazon | Understand the Inputs that Impact Results | Identify Best Practices for Selling on Amazon |

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