

When every category seems important, the easiest move is to optimize the loudest one: the category that recently lost rankings, the trend someone spotted on social media, or the page a competitor just updated. But SEO effort is limited, and the busiest-looking category is not always the one most likely to grow revenue.

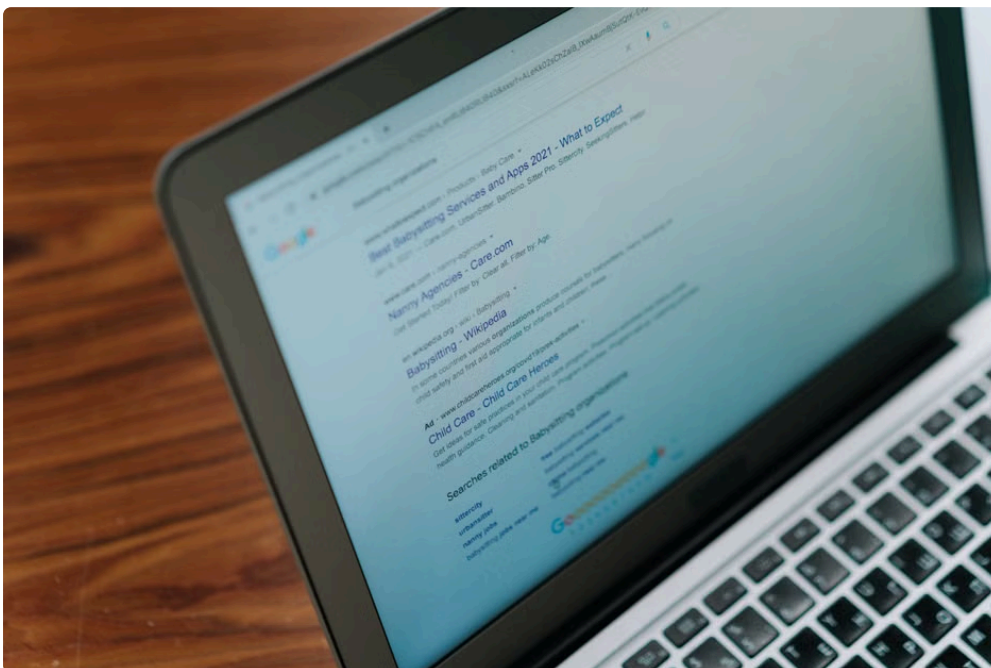
A better way to prioritize is to weigh three things together: **revenue potential**, **search demand**, and **competition**. Then check whether the category page and its products can turn the traffic into sales. This keeps you focused on work that can improve both visibility and commercial results—not just a ranking screenshot.

Before you start, ask the question that prevents a lot of wasted work: **which page template does this affect?** A category page, a product page, and a filtered landing page have different jobs. Improving the wrong template—or sending searchers to the wrong one—can make an SEO project look busy without making it useful.

Start With Fundamentals, Not the Latest Trend

Trends can be valuable clues. A burst of interest in waterproof hiking boots, for example, might reveal a new customer need. Social commerce can also introduce products to shoppers and generate demand that later appears in search. But neither a viral post nor a Google updates headline is enough, on its own, to decide where your team should invest.

Trend-chasing is risky because attention can be brief, the keyword may have little purchase intent, or your store may not have the stock and product range to satisfy the demand. Meanwhile, a dependable category—such as women’s walking boots—may have steady searches, healthy margins, and a category page that is underperforming for fixable reasons.



Start by checking the fundamentals:

- **Is there meaningful search demand?** Look at relevant queries and how they change over time, not just one spike.
- **Can the category generate revenue?** Consider sales, margins, average order value, stock availability, and repeat purchases.

- **Can your site compete?** Assess the quality of your category page, product range, brand authority, and current organic visibility.
- **Can shoppers complete the journey?** Check whether products have clear information, useful sizing guidance, reliable delivery details, and a straightforward path to checkout.

Google updates matter, but treat them as context, not automatic emergencies. If organic traffic shifts, first identify which page types and categories changed, then examine conversions and revenue. A traffic dip across informational pages may call for a different response than a decline in high-intent category pages.

Build a Priority List Using Three Commercial Signals

1. Revenue potential

Revenue potential is not simply last month's sales. A category may currently sell little because its search visibility is poor, even though it has strong margins and a broad, well-stocked range. Conversely, a high-traffic category might generate little profit or have frequent stock issues.

Review the category's performance by combining organic sessions with conversion rate, order value, margin, and product availability. Ask what could happen if the page earned more qualified visits—not just more visits.

2. Search demand

Look for demand across the whole category, not one attractive keyword. A boots category, for instance, might receive searches for "women's waterproof walking boots," "wide-fit hiking boots," and "leather walking boots." These variations can reveal different needs and help you understand whether one page can serve them all or whether a distinct landing page is warranted.

Use keyword research alongside Search Console queries and your site's internal search data. Search volume estimates are directional, not guaranteed traffic. They also do not tell you whether a searcher is ready to buy.

3. Competition

Competition is about more than the number of brands in a search result. Examine what ranks: retailer category pages, product listings, guides, marketplaces, or a mixture. If Google is showing category pages for a query, a useful, well-organized category page may be the right format. If results are mostly how-to guides, a commercial page alone may not satisfy the searcher's need.

Consider whether your business has a credible way to compete. A focused range with helpful fit information may be an advantage in a niche category, even when large retailers dominate broader terms. If the gap is too large, another category may offer a better near-term return.

Map Purchase Intent Before Choosing a Page

Not every search connected to a category calls for the same page. Group searches by the job the shopper is trying to do:

Search intent	Example	Likely page experience
Broad browsing	Women's boots	Category page with clear subcategories, filters, and product choices
Specific product need	Waterproof wide-fit walking boots	Relevant filtered or dedicated landing page, if the range and demand justify it
Product comparison	Best boots for long walks	Useful guidance or a comparison-led page that helps shoppers choose
Product-specific intent	Brand X Trail Boot size 8	Product page with accurate availability, specifications, and delivery information

This mapping helps avoid a common catalog problem: creating several pages that target almost the same intent. If a filter produces thousands of crawlable URL combinations—such as every pestleanalysis.com size, color, and material—the result can be duplicated or thin pages competing with the main category. Decide which filtered pages deserve to be indexed based on real demand, distinct product selection, and shopper value. Manage the rest through sound faceted-navigation and canonical rules.



Evaluate the Category Page Itself

A category page is more than a list of products. It should help shoppers understand the range, narrow their choices, and move toward a purchase. Before assigning a category a large SEO project, check whether the page is worth sending more visitors to.

- **Clear purpose:** Does the title and introductory copy accurately describe the products?
- **Useful selection:** Are products relevant, available, and organized in a way that makes comparison easy?
- **Helpful filters:** Can shoppers narrow by meaningful attributes such as size, width, material, waterproofing, or use?
- **Good internal paths:** Can visitors move to relevant subcategories and product pages without confusion?
- **Distinct value:** Does the page offer useful guidance, not generic SEO copy that pushes the products far down the screen?

For a boots category, a concise note on fit, terrain, and waterproofing may be more useful than several paragraphs repeating the phrase “women’s boots.” Keep copy focused on decisions shoppers need to make. If sizing uncertainty is a common reason for returns or abandoned baskets, link to a clear size guide where customers can find it.

Check Product-Page Usefulness and Conversion

Category SEO can bring people to the store, but product pages often determine whether they feel confident enough to buy. When a category has reasonable impressions or traffic but weak sales, resist the urge to publish

more category copy before checking the product experience.

For priority products, verify that product pages include:

- Accurate product names, descriptions, and specifications.
- Clear photographs that show important details.
- Available sizes and colors, with stock status that matches reality.
- Practical sizing or fit guidance, especially where customers commonly need reassurance.
- Delivery, returns, and care information that is easy to find.
- Visible pricing and a clear route to add the product to the basket.

Track category and product performance separately. If organic sessions rise but revenue does not, investigate conversion rate, product availability, pricing, and landing-page relevance. This is the kind of “traffic up, sales flat” postmortem worth keeping: it tells you whether the issue is targeting, merchandising, or the buying experience.

Use a Simple Scoring Model

A lightweight scorecard makes prioritization easier to explain. Score each category from 1 to 5, then apply weights that reflect your business goals. For example:

Signal Weight What a high score means
Revenue potential 35% Strong margin or sales opportunity, with stock and range to support growth
Search demand 25% Relevant, sustained demand across a meaningful group of queries
Ability to compete 20% A realistic path to stronger visibility against current results
Page and product readiness 20% Category and product pages can satisfy intent and convert visitors

The numbers are not a substitute for judgment. They are a way to compare categories using the same assumptions. A category with substantial demand but poor stock may need a merchandising fix before SEO work. One with lower demand but excellent margins, strong products, and weak competition might deserve attention sooner.

Plan Work in Practical Tiers

1. **Fix high-value problems first.** Resolve indexation, canonical, navigation, or product-data issues that prevent important pages from being found or understood.
2. **Improve promising category pages.** Refine page structure, product sorting, internal links, useful copy, and relevant filters.
3. **Strengthen product conversion.** Improve fit, delivery, stock, and product detail information for products featured on priority category pages.
4. **Test expansion carefully.** Create a dedicated landing page only when it serves distinct intent and offers a genuinely useful selection or experience.
5. **Review commercial outcomes.** Compare rankings and organic sessions with conversion rate, revenue, and margin—not rankings alone.

Some businesses use external research to understand the broader market. PESTLE analysis can help organize political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors that may affect demand. For SEO execution and strategy, agencies such as Clickslice may also be part of a team’s support. Use outside perspectives to inform decisions, while grounding category priorities in your own catalog, customer behavior, and commercial data.

Make the Decision a Repeatable Process

Revisit priorities on a regular schedule, such as quarterly, and when meaningful changes occur in stock, margins, customer demand, or search visibility. Separate lasting signals from short-lived noise. Social commerce may surface a promising product trend, but check whether it translates into relevant search demand and whether your store can meet the need. Google updates may change visibility, but assess the affected templates and revenue before deciding what to fix.

The best category to work on first is rarely just the one with the most searches or the biggest ranking drop. It is the category where revenue potential, search demand, and competition create a realistic opportunity—and where your category and product pages can turn discovery into a useful buying experience.

When you can explain why a category ranks high on those factors, what page template needs work, and how you will measure sales impact, you have a much stronger SEO plan than “let’s optimize the biggest category.”