

# Outrank Amazon with Your Shopify Store



Rank over Amazon? Yes you can. SEO expert Gert Mellak lets you in on Shopify SEO tips to beat the e-commerce giant that is Amazon.





**Gert Mellak**

**James:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is episode 889. And we're talking with [Gert Mellak](#) from [SEOLeverage.com](#). Welcome, Gert.

**Gert:** Hi, James.

**James:** You're our favorite SEO guest. You're on regularly, and for good reason. Every time we publish an episode, I get people reaching out to me saying, isn't that Gert guy clever? Isn't he helpful? He's been able to sort us out with our SEO audit or put in place a campaign, getting great results. Thank you so much for all the great [podcasts you do](#).

**Gert:** Always a pleasure.

**James:** You're right up there in the [top contributors](#), and we're very grateful. In our membership here, and in SuperFastBusiness land, the [podcast](#), and the audience, to have access to such an SEO god, sharing these insights and tips, like the last one we did was so popular. It was [how to generate leads from SEO](#).

You should definitely go back and listen to that one if you need leads for your business, if you sell anything, and you're used to just paying through the nose for ads that fade instantly, SEO may well be a solution.

## SEO versus Amazon

Today, we're talking about how to beat Amazon, on Google, with SEO. What does that mean?



**Gert:** It just means to give people a little bit of hope there is definitely a way how you can rank above Amazon. We have done this several times for e-commerce clients. And this is really, I think, we have a few good pieces of advice here today.

**James:** So you're saying if you sell a physical product on an e-commerce store of your own, and you go and search for that product, often, you'll see Amazon swamping the results, like in the info marketing world, you might find Wikipedia, or LinkedIn, some of these big companies are going to outrank you for your own phrases, and you've found a way to get on top of Amazon. That sounds pretty spectacular.

**Gert:** I think it's important that people are not discouraged. Very often, we hear that people don't want to go into SEO, because whatever product they type into Google, Amazon is there. But there are also other slots, right? There are also ways to do things much better than Amazon can at their scale, when you have a smaller, six, seven-figure store.

## The typical online shopping scenario

**James:** Let's talk about what the typical store is doing. We'll paint the scene, I suppose, of, you know, I imagine someone listening to this with an e-commerce store, they might be sitting there, and they might have one of any number of potential issues. I'll tell you one that I see as a consumer.

I was searching for something today, as it turns out, it was an unusual item. And it's a kind of thing that I found it on eBay, Amazon and on some private stores. But what I did notice when I figured out what I wanted, and I searched for the product name, very specific product name, all of the e-commerce stores had the exact same description specs, dimensions, they were homogenized.

And I was just sort of thinking to myself, it'd be virtually impossible for them to rank well for that. And I actually ended up buying from Amazon. They were the top search, actually eBay outranked them, I think maybe with a sponsored ad, but eBay, I find a little clunkier to use, and a little less trusting of who's actually supplying the thing. I've had good and bad experience with that.

With Amazon, I'm on Prime, I'll get the thing tomorrow or the next day. It's quick, it's easy. And they showed up. And they have, often, they got a lot of reviews, they have more in-depth information, like extra screenshots and stuff. Why do you think e-commerce stores are just punching out the exact same specs? Are they going off some kind of a feed? Or are they just copying it from the manufacturer or what?

## Where many e-commerce stores are challenged

**Gert:** I think an e-commerce store, and we have been having the pleasure to work with one store even for 16 years straight, month after month, working on the technical side until I couldn't see the product anymore after 16 years because they still wanted to continue. So I have never run my own store. But I have a very good understanding.

I was in every meeting and every decision, design, layout, tech. I was pretty much the CTO of the online store then. So I have a very good understanding and I just know running an e-commerce store is really, really hard, right? I think people don't have an idea when they're not behind an extra store, what this actually means to get all your products together, get all your titles, your descriptions together, all the data.

Very often, the filters on the left hand side, they only work if all this data is really structured in a database and the store software can fetch this properly. You might have some filters twice because different people on your team named them differently. It's a complete mess, right? Just for a start, running an e-commerce store.

And then if you imagine you have 500 products, that's insane. But imagine some people, we had a store, the 16-year store had 70,000 products at the end. It's a nightmare. So you can imagine you're not going to be able to write 70,000 different copies, and copies about, I don't know, a light bulb, an LED component for an electric store.

**James:** It'd get really boring. I grant that.

**Gert:** Absolutely, absolutely. It can get really boring. And the thing is that really, ultimately, people need to make decisions. And one of those decisions is that they like to say, they pretty much take the manufacturer feed and say, Look, as long as it's up there, someone might come across it. We might not have the best rankings, but let's just put it up there. And this happens over and over again.

**James:** You know, I like surfing, I'm sure that's no secret. And often, there's resellers of the popular brands, they have their little stores, their retail stores, where they sell sunglasses and T-shirts and hats and stuff. They take the manufacturer's information. They paste it word for word on Instagram post, even. And I know the words, I've read the words on the manufacturer's site, and now I'm reading the exact same, and I think it's lacking effort.

Come on, like, if you've ridden the thing, or you've owned it, or you know more about it, embellish it, flavor it up. I suppose if I had a store with 70,000 items, one of the first things I would be doing is I'd be saying to someone who's good at spreadsheets and stuff, can you show me which are our top four percent of products that are selling like crazy and make us the most profit? And I might start with them and flavor them out.

That would definitely be something I'd be interested in. And I would also, you know, I'm involved with [VisionFind.com](https://www.visionfind.com), it's a recruitment business for Philippines team members. I know for a fact, we have quite a few e-commerce clients who have hired people. And their main role is to update product descriptions, and to make them unique. Would you say it's worth doing for the right products?

**Gert:** For the right products, absolutely. But I'm with you. First of all, you need to get a little bit of focus and say, Okay, what do I really need to rank for?

**James:** Because you can't do it all, it's like, that 70,000, forget it. I'm limited resource. Not going to happen.

**Gert:** Exactly. And then again, products very often, depending on a niche, change all the time. So what's it worth to rank for something that's going to be outdated next month, right? You're not going to pay the effort. So you're going to try to group them up, you're going to zoom in on like, the four percent, you say, and then the rest, you try to group up, and then you're going to make a conscious decision of products you don't need to rank for unless someone searches for a specific ISBN code of this book, or whatever it is.

## Why James didn't go into e-commerce

**James:** You know, like, one of the reasons I don't have an e-commerce store is when I was running the Mercedes-Benz dealership, at any one time, we would have tens of millions of dollars' worth of parts sitting on metal shelves in a warehouse. And they become obsolete, they get lost, they get mislabeled. It's hard to even store them and to know what you've even got cataloged.



And you had to continually audit them. There's this huge cost of having a lot of things. And I imagine a lot of people could do an inventory audit, run an obsolescence program to get rid of old stuff and stop wasting time and energy on things that will never sell. And the funniest thing, you know, one of the hottest items in our Mercedes-Benz parts area was Mercedes-Benz branded umbrellas.

And I found out they were so popular, like people would buy them as gifts for people. It's a great thing to put in the back of the car, they were amazing for Father's Day. They were awesome for Christmas, birthdays, you give someone a Mercedes-Benz umbrella. And they were so popular, I started selling them on eBay as a channel for the dealership, and it went crazy.

We were shipping them all around the country, even though people would have had one in their local suburb or nearby. But it was really interesting mining it out. And just like, of all the things you think, it's not the gearbox, it's not the fenders, it's not even the brake pads and stuff. It was, like, umbrellas. Super high margin, high volume. It was fascinating.

## Don't give up just yet

So back to topic, you're saying, so far that we do have hope. We can outrank Amazon. We shouldn't focus all of our energy on all of our things. There'll be some that warrant extra, and we shouldn't just phone it in with an automatic fetch. We might want to work a bit harder.

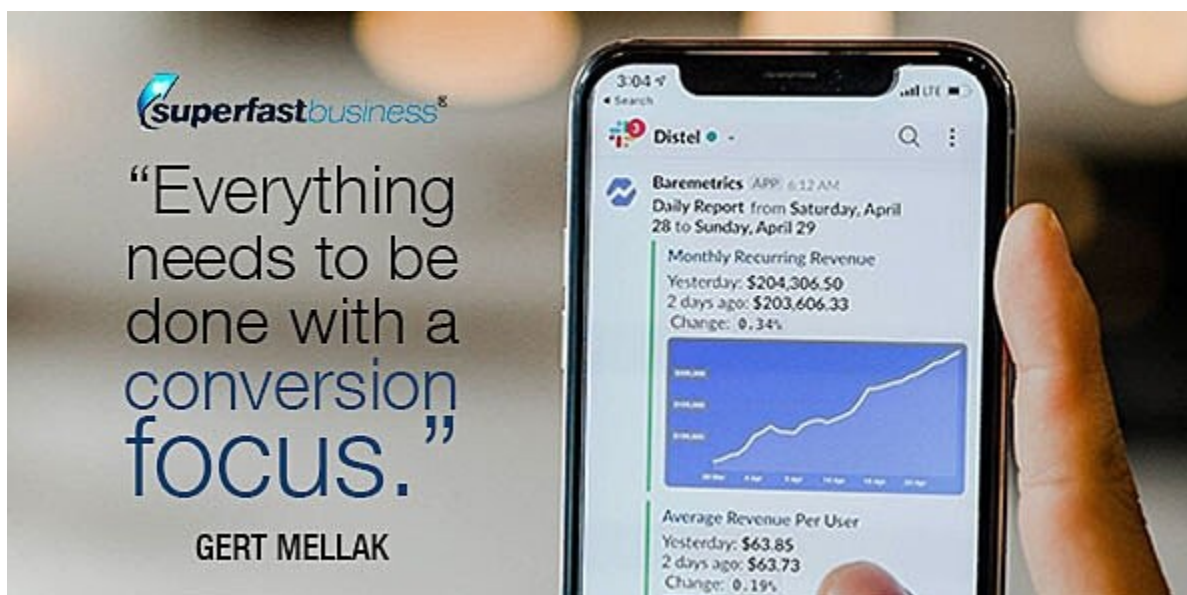
If we were going to work harder to outrank Amazon, and we decide, Okay, I can overcome some of the challenges of having to do that. I know I might have to hire someone, I know I need to spend some time. There'll be effort involved in scrutinizing where we should put our effort. What do we do next?

**Gert:** Absolutely. You want to have an overall strategy. People very often rely on paid ads. We know in the last quarter of the year paid ads have been increasing, click prices, conversions are really, really expensive; leads, sales, everything gets expensive in the last quarter of the year. This is very often when people say, Look, we might not want to rely on paid ads alone.

And now when you have your grouping, you have your focus, you need to really line up a team in order to work this consistently. And very often, we work directly with a client's team. We're going to line up the strategy and say, Look, please help us define those four products, we can't define them, this must be declined, whether they have the highest margins, whether they're products they really need to sell because of the stock, etc. And we adjust.

But then we do a lot of research here, we do a lot of competitive research, we see how can we really make sure that we provide a better user experience. We just had a client pretty much double their revenue, because we started adding some content to pages where they wouldn't even add content. So specifically, for example, collection pages can really be increased in value, just by adding specific content that is really informative, really also gives Google a little bit more of context.





Because if you think about it, an e-commerce store is just a list of things, right? It's just a list of things, and their release looks very much the same. And especially if this is a store with 50,000 products, they're going to have 10,000 pages that pretty much look exactly the same. And it's hard for a machine to figure things out. So this is where content comes in. This is where grouping comes in. This is where internal linking and site structure comes in. And then everything needs to be done with a conversion focus, as well.

### Is it worth all the effort?

**James:** But what about if someone says, Oh, come on. Sounds like hard work, I think I'll just, list my stuff on Amazon. And I don't even know how that works, but I think you can list your own stock on Amazon, right, for sale by Amazon or whatever. Or they've tried an agency, but they didn't get the results, like what would make it different this time?

**Gert:** I think the difference is, once you have someone who really tries to line up what actually matters, in a short period of time, for you, and helps you in a hand-holding way through this process, this is what really makes the difference. And you need to reevaluate this. It's not enough to sign a one-year contract. I have heard there are agencies who do contracts, we never did them.

**James:** Sometimes the agencies who want a long-term contract are not confident they can get a result. So they'd rather just make sure they get paid. And they put all the risk on the customer, no risk on themselves. Right?

**Gert:** Exactly. We never did contracts. We had everybody on a monthly renewing agreement.

**James:** So you, hang on, you get paid if you get results. And if you don't get results, then you stop getting paid because that would, you know, I'm sure that probably never happens to you anyway. Same with me, I give people the option to buy monthly. You could be listening to this episode and say, I'm going to give James a shot and hire me for one month, the \$99 option, and you can just try one month and see if you like what's going on. And then make a decision from there.

So I think lowering the bar is good. It puts the focus on the person that you're contracting to actually help you get the results. And if you don't get the results, you don't continue. And if you do get the results, you do continue, and everyone's happy.

**Gert:** Funny story. Years ago I started like that, I started one month at SuperFastBusiness.

**James:** Did you? Well, thanks for sticking around. Now, we're, like, business partners. You know, like the average membership owner is clocking over 50 months now. I just looked up yesterday, of active members of SuperFast. That's an enormously long time.

**Gert:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**James:** And you know, look, we started out as strangers and then we got to know each other, but you started working on some of my clients' SEO, they were raving about you. And I thought, gosh, I think you'd be a perfect fit for the fact that I do have a lot of clients who need SEO. I had an SEO business and sold it. I'm well and truly past the point of any compete or whatever.

Even actually, with the permission of the guy who bought that business from me, some of the team have moved into your business, so I'm more or less doing something similar to before, but via you and growing your business. And I love that, that you get to do all the fun stuff, and I just get to talk about this with you and [SEO topic themed podcast episodes](#), but we're a good team, Gert.

That's what I like about you. You do care about the customers. That comes through. You do get results, because I see it in the private coaching threads of many people who - they don't want to say that they're getting SEO from you because they want to keep you as a secret weapon. So yeah, [SEOLeverage.com](#) is the secret weapon of a lot of the people in my atmosphere. And you work for some big players, plenty of names that my audience would recognize. And I think it's great watching your business grow through the ability to actually get results.

### **You do need to have a team**

So let's say you can get results for an e-commerce customer, you sit down with them, you help them work out their strategy, you find some quick wins, you help them direct their team. I think it's important, and we have said this before, you need to have a team to do the stuff on your side. Like, we work with you with SEO, you're plugged into our [Slack](#), you give us a quick Loom video showing us what to do, and then my team put it on their actions list.

Currently, they're going through updating things that you've asked them to do. They work on site speed, when you say speed up the site. They work on changing the content, older content into newer content, pruning old posts. These are the things that need active management. So you will need some resource in your team to do it.

**Gert:** Absolutely, it's so important. And I actually have told some people not to start our program because they could see they were a one-man, one-woman show, and it was not going to happen. I just know from experience, that when I give them five things they should be focusing on and implementing in a couple of weeks, and they're the business owner, they're running the marketing, they're on podcasts, they're writing a book, they're doing this as well, it's going to pile up and after a few months, we're going to have 25 tasks that have never been touched.

### **The kind of results Gert has gotten**

And if you don't react on time to Google shifts, it's a really difficult thing to get an SEO campaign working. Our best clients, the clients get the best results, we have a client that gets 5000 leads a month. They have several assistants...

**James:** I'm sorry, did you say 5000 leads a month?

**Gert:** Yeah, these are opt-in links. These are not requests for proposals. But these are opt-in links. I mean, this guy is crazy, right? It's definitely an exception. An average client might get maybe a few hundred of those, or maybe a thousand. But the best clients are the ones that are able to implement what we suggest in a couple of weeks.

And this is a timeframe that we defined after experience. We tried monthly, we tried weekly, the best one was really two weeks' time, because this gives them time to ask questions, gives them time to implement, this gives us time to check if this was done correctly, and then track the results a few weeks later.

And this is a rhythm that just works. If you can't keep this up because people are busy and not on e-commerce store and the center, a lot of things, and the person that works with us might also be adding 500 products to the store and writing descriptions, etc. So you just need to dedicate resources to this and commit to it.

**James:** Right. So that's about the right level of in-your-faceness. Two weeks.

**Gert:** Absolutely. Two weeks keeps everybody accountable. I tell clients, literally, I poke them with a stick every couple of weeks. And say, Look, there was SEO, right? Remember SEO, remember you didn't do this. And now this article doesn't rank as well anymore. Remember, remember, you added this conversion, this lead magnet was adjusted, and now you're getting much more conversions.



Remember this URL that used to rank well, and it doesn't anymore? Now Google has shifted, you need to rewrite it, right? We're probably not the best friend, so to speak, because we constantly remind them of what they might have not been focusing on. But once people see results, and they see hundreds of leads coming in, or they see organic sales coming in, the game changes completely.

**James:** Well, they don't call you the Gertanator for nothing. Okay, so you're putting an end to all the SEO woes of your clients. So you're getting them all sorted out. I imagine we're talking predominantly here about a Shopify platform.

**Gert:** These days. Absolutely.

**James:** Is that the go-to gold standard out of the box, ready to go?

**Gert:** Absolutely. Absolutely. Whoever doesn't have Shopify is probably considering migrating to Shopify.

**James:** Except for Jeff Bezos.

**Gert:** Probably.

### **How do you know it's working?**

**James:** Okay, so, they're tuning it up, they're getting results. What sort of things could we expect to see, like how does it play out? What does the success path look like?

**Gert:** The success path can certainly look like it suddenly, certain collections, certain categories get much more traction. You suddenly see organic sales coming in, when you log into your Shopify, it's going to tell you where the sale comes from. And if you get a few hundred dollars of sale, and it's suddenly organic, this really motivates you.

You can see that content does rank on an e-commerce store. This is an important topic for people to see, okay, we have a list of products, but nobody thinks of actually describing and picking up people at a much higher stage of the sales funnel than actually when they are absolutely ready to purchase. And this is a big step.

We're just having great success with one client, we direct their content efforts and then they have someone write this content based on our instructions. And this is outranking a lot of other key players in their industry. And they just describe what this product is doing. The people might not even need this product. They just have questions about it, and maybe three months down the road, this free visitor that got exposed to your brand suddenly then remembers you, makes a purchase, or you target them with paid ads.

There's a very good collaboration between SEO and paid ads as well. If you just get the traffic for free, that qualifies as traffic and you retarget those people, you can really get them to take action at the right moment.

### **An action plan to outrank Amazon**

**James:** Okay, so let's break it down, like chunk it into sort of an action guide here. We want to outrank Amazon, we've got a Shopify store, go.

**Gert:** Absolutely. Shopify store, Shopify comes with a series of things that need to be fixed when it comes to SEO. Filters are one of those things, multiple versions of how to link to a product are another thing. So usually, when a Shopify site comes in, we audit the entire site, check out what needs to be fixed, what has been fixed already, what are potential issues, some Shopify apps work better than others for filters, for example, in terms of what kind of URLs they generate, etc.

A lot of technical stuff that needs to be assessed. And then we line up a prioritized list of action steps based on effort and impact, so people know what to focus on. And from there, once those things are fixed, we really try to find the priorities as soon as possible, similar as with your site, where we look from all those URLs you have, from more than almost 900 podcast episodes, we wanted to focus on those...

**James:** We got so much content, it's ridiculous.

**Gert:** You need to focus, you pretty much have a similar issue as an e-commerce site.

**James:** Yes, now we do, we got content management. And as you've often talked about, Google doesn't want to troll the whole site all the time, we have to present to them the bits that are better.

So I'll have to see, I'd really love to go through my site, find what the absolute pinnacle of content is, and stick it on a new site and start again, one day. I think it'll be a lot of fun. I'm really tossing that idea around at the moment.

**Gert:** A lot of content has its purpose for people who want to explore, for people who want to read, etc. And they just want to read everything you ever talked about, membership sites, for example, and it has its purpose.

**James:** I've literally got an entire book of membership sites. So, like, the [membership series](#) I did with [John Lint](#) is the chapters of my book. It's the first sort of draft of my book. And there's so much content. There are some people, I think I know about eight or nine people so far, have said to me, they've listened to every single episode, which I think is very enthusiastic, and quite humbling. And somewhat surprising.

But I do think people can go and search the site for the episode, things they want. And there is some logical interlinking between the various things. There's lots of series, you've helped me come up with series pages. And there's so much more work we can do. But yeah, when you've got a big volume of stuff, you've got options.

And that's when you get the biggest gain from bringing in an expert to say, like you did, you said, Oh my gosh, you got all this stuff here. If you put this over here, you get rid of that and you link these together, you get some magic. And guess what? We get the magic. We've talked about that before, the case study results of my own website.

## Now go do this

You're my secret not so secret weapon, SEOLeverage.com. Gert Mellak. This has been a good episode. So what would you like the action step to be for someone listening to this, if they've got a Shopify store, and they're not happy with the SEO results they've been getting?

**Gert:** Absolutely, they can head over to our site, just get in touch with us. We can have a chat, talk about potential opportunities for their website, and then I can orientate, can we help? Do we think we'll be confident we can help them through? Do they have to set up the team in order to make this happen? Or are they better off sticking with paid ads alone? That's fine as well.

I love having a chat. I love talking to people and analyzing sites. That's pretty much what I do these days. So yeah, just get in touch.

**James:** That and woodwork.

**Gert:** This and woodwork. When I don't analyze websites, I try to analyze how to make the woodworking happen.

**James:** Gert, you are a rare bear. I appreciate you very much. Thank you for sharing. And if you've got a question for Gert, you want me to cover on an episode, send it in, james@superfastbusiness.com. Gert's over there at [SEOLeverage.com](https://SEOLeverage.com), a wonderful contributor to this show, a partner, I've been helping him grow that business, and I just love the results it's getting, because he's good. So there you go. See you on the next one.

**Gert:** Thank you so much, James.





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