

If a category page lists products but gives shoppers little help choosing between them, it may be thin—even if it contains dozens of items. Thinness is not simply a word count problem. It is a usefulness problem: the page does not clearly match what people are searching for, help them compare options, or make the next step easy.

The fix is not to paste a long generic introduction above the products. Start by asking: **which page template does this affect?** A category page needs a different job from a product page, a buying guide, or a filter landing page. Then map the search intent to the right template and improve the content, navigation, and products together.

This guide explains a practical approach to category page optimization, on-page content, and internal linking. It also covers how to distinguish durable SEO fundamentals from trend-chasing, and how to make product pages more useful and more likely to convert.

First, Diagnose the Page—Not Just Its Word Count

Before rewriting anything, check whether the page is actually the right result for the search. A category page should usually help shoppers browse a group of related products. If the query is asking for instructions, a comparison, or a specific product recommendation, a category page alone may not satisfy it.

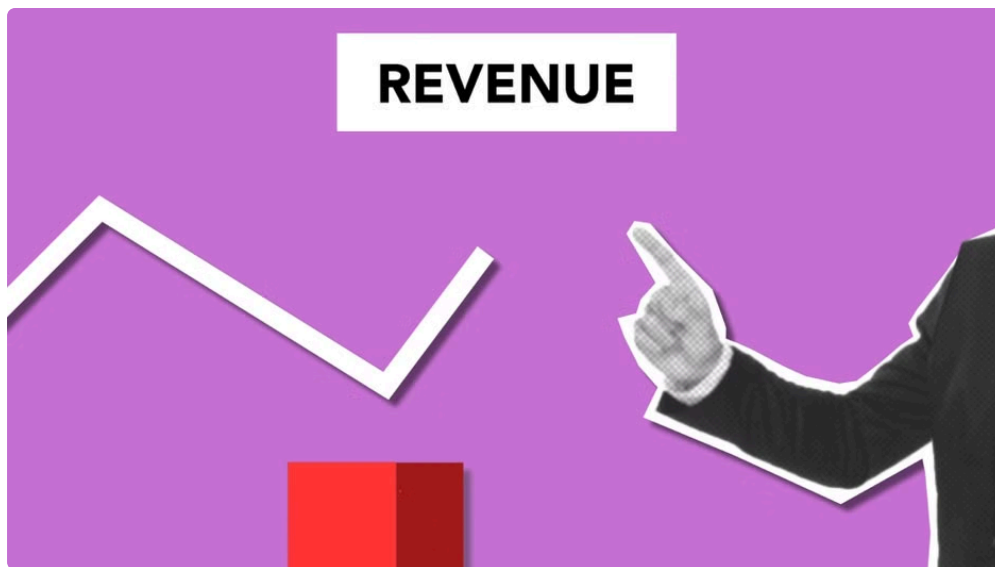
Review the page’s organic impressions and clicks alongside business outcomes. A ranking screenshot without revenue context is only part of the picture. Look at click-through rate, product clicks, add-to-cart rate, conversion rate, and revenue where available. This helps identify the familiar “traffic up, sales flat” problem: more visitors may not mean the page is attracting the right shoppers or helping them choose.

- **Check search results:** What page types appear for the target query—category pages, product pages, guides, or a mix?
- **Review query data:** Are impressions coming from terms that accurately describe the products on the page?
- **Inspect the template:** Is the page easy to browse on mobile, and are products visible without excessive scrolling?
- **Check indexation:** Are filters creating duplicate or low-value URLs that compete with the main category?
- **Assess commercial performance:** Do visitors click products and buy, or do they leave without progressing?

Map Purchase Intent to the Right Page

Purchase intent is rarely a simple split between “informational” and “transactional.” Someone searching for “waterproof hiking boots” may be ready to shop but still need help with terrain, fit, and materials. A search for “best boots for wide feet” may call for a curated category, a buying guide, or both.

Group your target queries by the shopper’s task. Then assign each group to a page type that can do that task well. This avoids trying to make one category page rank for every related phrase—and stops category pages from becoming bloated blog posts.



Search intent Example query Best-fit page experience Browse a product type Women's waterproof hiking boots
Category page with relevant products, useful filters, and concise buying guidance Compare features Leather vs. synthetic hiking boots Comparison or buying guide, linked to suitable categories and products Find a specific product Brand model name size 7 Product page with accurate availability, sizing, delivery, and returns information
Solve a fit or use-case problem Hiking boots for wide feet Focused landing page or curated category, supported by clear fit information

Use Google Search Console, site search data, customer service questions, and product reviews to build this map. If shoppers repeatedly ask whether a boot runs small, that is evidence for useful sizing guidance—not a reason to add another generic paragraph about outdoor adventures.

Build a Category Page Around the Shopper's Decision

A strong category page does three things: confirms the shopper is in the right place, helps them narrow the selection, and gives them confidence to click a product. The best category page strategy supports those tasks before adding extra prose.

Make the category clear at a glance

Use a specific title and introduction that explain what is included. "Women's Waterproof Hiking Boots" is clearer than "Explore the Outdoors." A short opening can distinguish the range, mention meaningful product types, and point out important selection criteria. Keep it relevant to the products actually listed.

Help shoppers narrow the range

Filters should reflect real buying decisions: size, width, material, waterproofing, color, or intended terrain, for example. Make filter labels understandable, ensure selected filters are visible, and let shoppers remove them easily. If the catalog supports it, useful sorting options can also help customers find new arrivals, best sellers, or price points.

Pay attention to faceted navigation. A filter combination can create a URL without creating a useful search landing page. Decide which filtered pages deserve to be indexable based on demand, product availability, and whether the page offers a distinct, stable experience. Keep low-value combinations from multiplying into thousands of near-duplicate URLs, and use consistent canonical and crawl controls. Do not assume every filter URL needs to rank.

Write on-page content that answers actual questions

On-page content should add information the product grid cannot provide on its own. Consider a concise introduction above the products, followed by useful guidance lower on the page. The right placement depends on the design: shoppers should not have to scroll through an essay before they can browse.

For the boots category, useful content might explain how to choose waterproofing, how fit differs by use, or which sole types suit different terrain. Avoid repeating a keyword in every heading or using the same text across dozens of categories. Specific, accurate advice is more useful than a fixed word-count target.

Use Internal Linking to Connect the Shopping Journey

Internal linking helps shoppers move between related choices and helps search engines understand how the site is organized. A category page should not be an isolated endpoint. Link to genuinely helpful subcategories, guides, and relevant product pages using clear, descriptive link text.

- Link from a broad boots category to meaningful subcategories such as trail running shoes or winter hiking boots, if those collections exist.
- Link to a sizing guide from categories and product pages where fit is a common concern.
- Use buying guides to introduce decision criteria, then link to the categories that match each use case.
- Link back to the parent category through breadcrumbs and clear navigation.
- Make sure important categories are reachable through crawlable links, not only through on-site search or complex scripts.

Keep links purposeful. A page does not need a block of unrelated “popular posts” just to increase the number of internal links. The aim is to connect the next useful step in the shopper’s journey.

Improve Product Page Usefulness and Conversion

Category page rankings cannot compensate for product pages that leave shoppers uncertain. Once a visitor clicks a product, the page should make it easy to decide whether that item is right for them and whether it can be delivered on acceptable terms.

Prioritize details that reduce uncertainty:

- Accurate product names, descriptions, specifications, and images.
- Clear size or fit guidance, including how the item compares with standard sizing when you can substantiate that claim.
- Visible stock status and available variants.
- Delivery costs, estimated arrival information, and return details.
- Helpful customer reviews and answers to common questions.
- Clear calls to action and an easy-to-use mobile purchase flow.

Keep these details consistent with the category experience. If a category promises waterproof boots but several listed products are water-resistant rather than waterproof, shoppers may feel misled. Labels, filters, product attributes, and copy should agree. This improves trust and can reduce avoidable returns as well as conversion friction.



Don't Chase Every Trend or Google Update

SEO teams can spend too much time reacting to headlines about Google updates and too little time fixing pages shoppers already struggle to use. Updates are worth monitoring, but a short-term ranking movement does not automatically mean the entire site needs a rewrite. First check whether the change is isolated, whether the affected template is consistent, and whether business performance has changed too.

Focus on durable fundamentals: accurate pages, useful products, crawlable architecture, good mobile usability, and content that matches intent. Trends can inform your ideas, but they should not replace evidence from customers and search data.

The same principle applies to social commerce. Social platforms can reveal how customers describe products, what styles are getting attention, and which questions come up in comments. Use those insights as research—not as proof that a search category should be renamed around a passing trend. Confirm demand, make sure your assortment supports the page, and build a useful destination on your own site.

For structured planning, some teams use frameworks such as PESTLE analysis to think about wider market or consumer factors. That can help with context, but it does not replace query research, catalog checks, or testing the page itself. SEO consultancy teams such as Clickslice may also help with audits and implementation; whichever approach you take, tie recommendations to the affected template and a measurable outcome.

A Practical Fix Plan for Thin Category Pages

1. **Choose a priority:** Start with categories that have meaningful demand, strong product availability, and room to improve commercially.
2. **Map intent:** Group relevant queries by shopper task and decide which page type should serve each group.
3. **Audit the template:** Review the title, introduction, filters, product grid, mobile experience, indexation, and internal links.
4. **Improve decision support:** Add specific buying guidance based on customer questions and product differences.

5. **Strengthen product destinations:** Improve fit, availability, delivery, returns, imagery, and other details that help a shopper act.
6. **Measure the right results:** Track organic visibility alongside product clicks, add-to-cart rate, conversion, and revenue.
7. **Revisit after implementation:** Give search engines time to recrawl, then compare performance against the original baseline and check for unintended effects.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Adding copy just to hit a word count:** Length is not a substitute for usefulness.
- **Writing one template paragraph for every category:** Repeated text rarely helps shoppers distinguish one range from another.
- **Indexing every filter combination:** Many combinations have little unique value and can dilute crawl attention.
- **Sending every query to a category page:** Some searches need a guide, a comparison, or a specific product page.
- **Measuring rankings alone:** Visibility matters, but so do qualified visits and sales.
- **Ignoring inventory:** A page built around products that are unavailable or poorly matched to the query will disappoint visitors.

Make the Page More Useful Before Making It Longer

To fix a thin category page, start with its purpose. Match it to the right purchase intent, present a relevant product range, make filtering straightforward, and add on-page content that helps shoppers choose. Connect the page to useful guides and subcategories through thoughtful internal linking, then make sure each product page answers practical questions about fit, stock, delivery, and returns.

Do not treat every Google update or social commerce trend as an emergency. Fix the template-level issues that affect real shoppers, measure visibility and revenue together, and improve the pages where better guidance can lead to better decisions. That is a more reliable path to category page optimization than adding words for their own [faceted navigation SEO](#) sake.