



Ecommerce Merchandising The Secret Behind High- Converting Product Displays

// 4 overlooked tactics to optimize your product display order

Getting the right product, in front of the right person, at the right time

*It sounds simple, but there's something of an art to it.
That art is merchandising.*

Controlling how your products are displayed can be the difference between a shopper serendipitously finding what they're looking for, or bouncing to a competitor because the item they wanted was hidden on page five of your results. In which case, you might as well not have it in stock at all.

Product display order is just one aspect of a merchandising strategy, but it's an important one. This guide takes you through **four tactics for optimizing your product display order**: which products should be grouped and separated, promoted and demoted.

Most importantly, we'll show you how to do it with minimal manual intervention.



Guide Contents

// tactic 1

Group the right products

- 1.1 Related products
- 1.2 Similar products
- 1.3 Brands

// tactic 2

Separate the right products

- 2.1 Products and accessories
- 2.2 Identifying products to separate

// tactic 3

Promote the right products

- 3.1 On-sale products
- 3.2 High-converting products
- 3.3 High margin products
- 3.4 Trending products
- 3.5 Products based on demographic

// tactic 4

Demote the right products

- 4.1 Out of stock items
- 4.2 Products with missing images
- 4.3 Rotating products

// tactic 1

Group the right products

Displaying similar, related, or matching products together seems like a cross-selling no-brainer, yet so many sites fail to merchandise their products in this way. Not only can this simple tactic increase average order value (AOV), it also minimizes searching and makes for a more natural shopping experience.

Set a rule based on **Any data field**

Search Keyword: game day dress

Condition **Predefined options**

is
is not
✓ is sorted
is more/older than
is less/newer than

Parameter **Any data field value**

× category

× brand

// 1.1

Group the right products

Related products

Imagine you're out browsing at your local mall for that killer new two-piece for next weekend's pool party.

How's the merchandise displayed?

Are all the tops on one rack and all the bottoms on another rack across the store?

Of course not, that'd be silly. For merchants, it makes sense to group products the same way online.



// 1.2

Group the right products

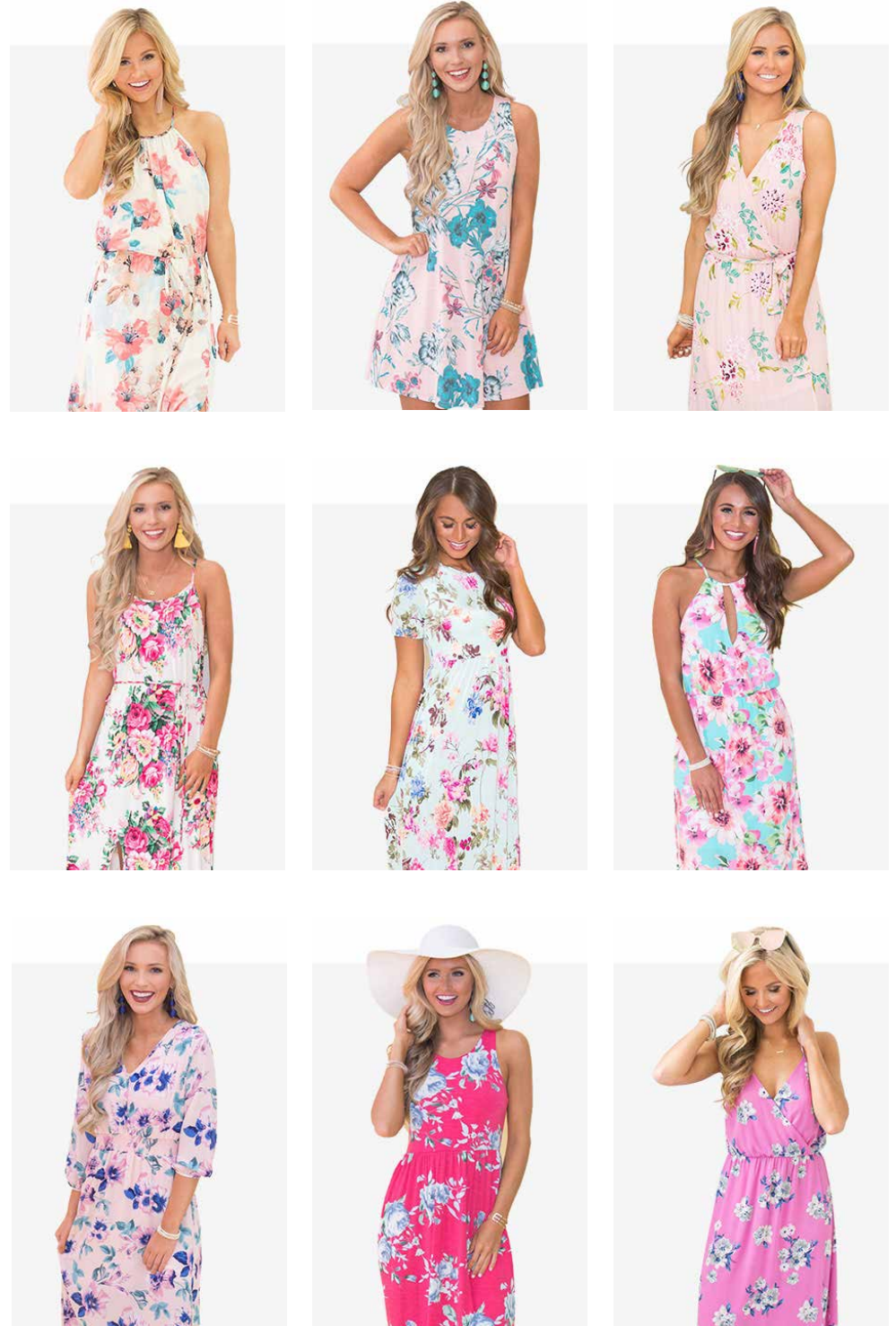
Similar products

Grouping isn't limited to ensembles or matching product sets.

PinkLily groups products in the same category based on their color. Again, this is very similar to the way the retailers merchandise their items in physical stores.

For those who aren't sure of exactly what they want to buy yet, this style of presentation can help to introduce them to the variety of options available within that category.

Let's call this one the "mall browser's merchandising strategy."



// 1.3

Group the right products

Brands

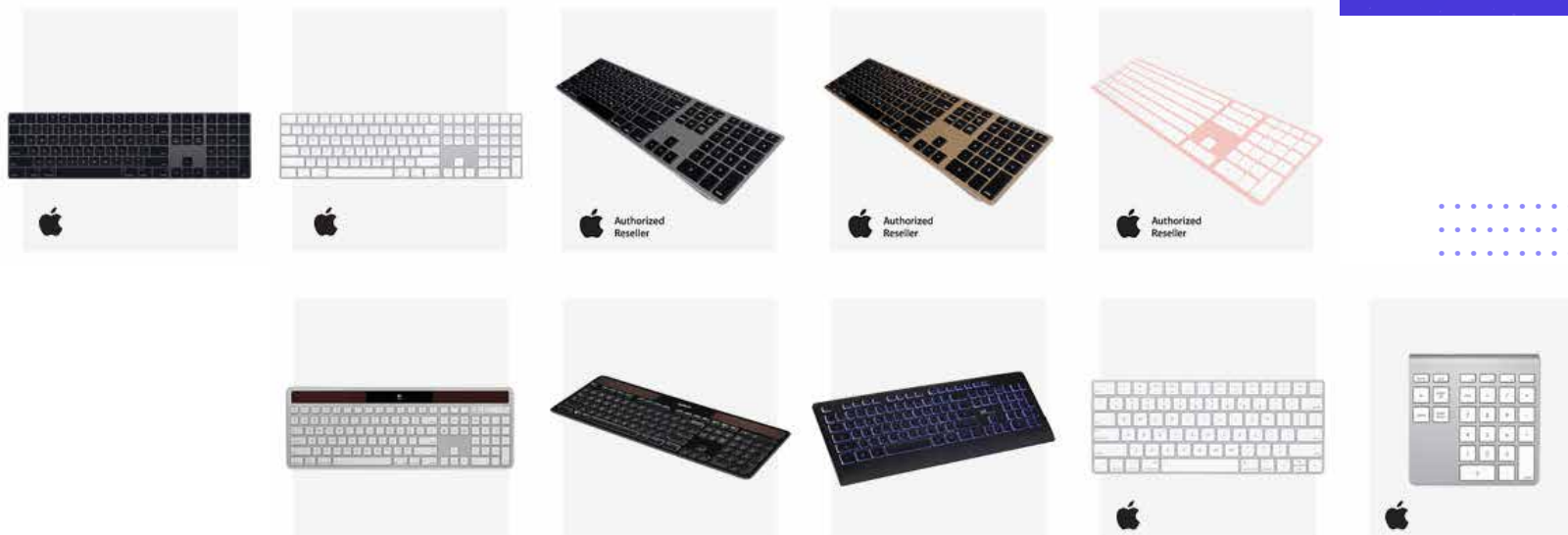
In brick-and-mortar retail, it's very common to place items from the same brand next to each other on the shelf, or on the same rack.

Often, this practice translates well to the online store as well. Imagine shopping for an “Apple Extended Keyboard.”

Now, we all know Apple doesn't play nice with 3rd party hardware (most of the time). So, even though there are a plethora of

3rd party options, promoting and grouping original Apple products together might be advantageous and incredibly helpful for shoppers.

At the very least, anytime 3rd party vs. OEM is at play, grouping branded products together is a smart play.



// tactic 2

Separate the right products

While it may seem obvious that certain products should be grouped together, many retailers overlook the need to occasionally distance some items from each other. How can you tell which of your wares just need some space?

Set a rule based on **Any data field**

Search Keyword: nintendo

Condition **Predefined options**

✓ is

is not

is sorted

is more/older than

is less/newer than

Parameter **Any data field value**

✕ tag: console

// 2.1

Separate the right products

Products & accessories

When a user searches for a high ticket item, the last thing you want to do is display a page full of accessories. That's the #1 sin we see online retailers, large and small, making all the time.

When a shopper searches or browses for a "Nintendo Switch" they expect to see a Nintendo Switch, not adapters, cables, controllers, and whatnots.

Promote the products that match the shopper's intent. Move the accessories down.

9 times out of 10 when a user wants an accessory item, the search or browsing behavior will be more specific.



// 2.2

Separate the right products

Identifying products to separate

Granted, that won't "always" be the case, so if you're unsure on a set of products, take a peek at your Google Analytics.

Go to the "Search Terms" report under Behavior and look at these data points:

Search exits:

A significantly higher than average exit rate would likely indicate that the results visitors are seeing are not satisfactory.

Time after search:

This tells us how much additional time the visitor spent on your site after completing this search. Higher numbers are generally better.

Search refinements:

This tells us how many times people who searched for "nintendo switch" tried another variation. Any time this number is greater than 0, it means they didn't find what they wanted.

Average search depth:

This tells us how many additional pages were viewed after completing the initial search. If this number is between 1 and 2, it could mean that they clicked on a product, and then went on to other areas of the site. If it's higher than that, this probably means that people didn't find what they wanted and went on to try other search queries.

// tactic 3

Promote the right products

Promotional and boosting rules aren't just for sales (although this is important to highlight too). Get a large number of new shoppers each month? Promoting popular products can ensure they are greeted with the results that are most likely to convert, even if you don't know their individual preferences yet.

Set a rule based on **Any data field**

Field: Price

Condition **Predefined options**

- is
- is not
- ✓ is sorted
- is more/older than
- is less/newer than

Parameter **Any data field value**

✕ high to low

// 3.1

Promote the right products

On-sale products

Have a flash sale coming up, or maybe trying to clear out some stagnant inventory with a sale?

Get those products top, front and center. Boost sale items to the top of your results pages.

Bonus: pre-set the display order with date triggers so any product on sale only moves to the top of the results display while it's on sale and reverts to its original product display order when it's not.



// 3.2

Promote the right products

High-converting products

Imagine searching for “dress” and all the best performers (not most clicked, but most purchased) display in the first few positions.

Make this strategy global or only for a select few product categories.

Either way, it’s a great way to engage your first-time shoppers with your tried and true best product offerings.

**Clicked: 851 Purchased: 517****Clicked: 1131 Purchased: 423****Clicked: 901 Purchased: 398****Clicked: 458 Purchased: 310**

// 3.3

Promote the right products

High margin products

It's ideal to focus on what the shopper wants, but why should that come at your expense? You can get yours too!

Boost products that have higher margins, while retaining the overall relevance of products on a particular search or category page.



Stock: 13
Margin: 25.2%



Stock: 5
Margin: 24.8%



Stock: 8
Margin: 24.8%



Stock: 11
Margin: 21.3%



Stock: 9
Margin: 20.9%



Stock: 13
Margin: 18.4%



Stock: 5
Margin: 15.1%



Stock: 22
Margin: 12.1%



Stock: 18
Margin: 8.5%

// 3.4

Promote the right products

Trending products

How vulnerable are trends?

If you're at the mercy of a temperamental customer base, promoting products based on popularity could be your ticket to relief-ville.

Rather than manually arranging products on a day-to-day basis, try setting an automated rule that promotes products that have been popular over the last few hours to days.



All-Time Sold: 1523
Last 24 hours: 303



All-Time Sold: 910
Last 24 hours: 289



All-Time Sold: 902
Last 24 hours: 263



All-Time Sold: 881
Last 24 hours: 248



All-Time Sold: 1129
Last 24 hours: 205



All-Time Sold: 996
Last 24 hours: 183



All-Time Sold: 1554
Last 24 hours: 164



All-Time Sold: 1228
Last 24 hours: 158



All-Time Sold: 758
Last 24 hours: 151



All-Time Sold: 844
Last 24 hours: 133



All-Time Sold: 1001
Last 24 hours: 102



All-Time Sold: 933
Last 24 hours: 93



All-Time Sold: 523
Last 24 hours: 74



All-Time Sold: 784
Last 24 hours: 71



All-Time Sold: 605
Last 24 hours: 36



All-Time Sold: 923
Last 24 hours: 18

// 3.5

Promote the right products

Products based on demographic

Many retailers cater to many demographics but receive an amount of traffic from one in particular.

As one example, novelty shops often find that despite carrying costumes for male and female characters, the overwhelming majority of the sales are for female costumes.

Even a search for “spiderman” (which by default is a male product) often results in purchases of female versions.

In this case, a rule could be created that would promote female products above male ones.



// tactic 4

Demote the right products

Merchandising isn't exclusively about the products you promote front and center.

Sometimes, it's about the items you choose not to prioritize, the ones you quietly push to the bottom of the page to let your star attractions shine.

Set a rule based on **Any data field**

Field: Stock

Condition **Predefined options**

- is
- is not
- is sorted
- is more/older than
- ✓ is less/newer than

Parameter **Any data field value**

✕ count: 1

// 4.1

Demote the right products

Out of stock items

* click *

“out of stock”

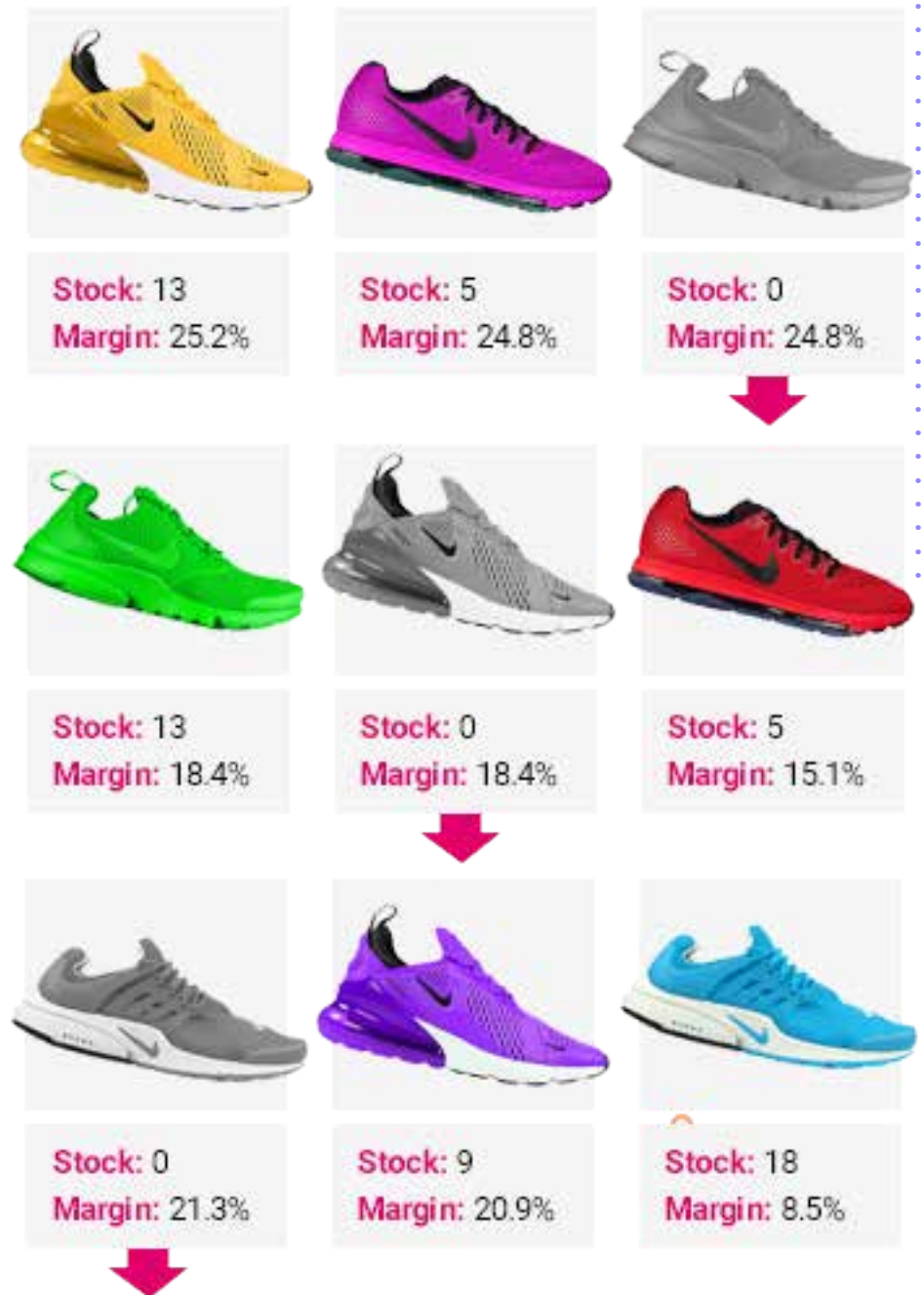
* click *

“on backorder”

You know your shoppers are cursing you from the other side of the screen, right? Not anymore!

Demote out of stock items to the bottom of the results page.

Bonus: Use this strategy with any sales and promotions that you're running. Imagine the shopper hate you'll avoid by no longer displaying that product that JUST went out of stock at the top of the results.



// 4.2

Demote the right products

Products with missing images

Stupid simple.

Shockingly under-used.

Outside of making shopping easier, demoting items that are missing product images to the bottom of results pages can pay dividends.



// 4.3

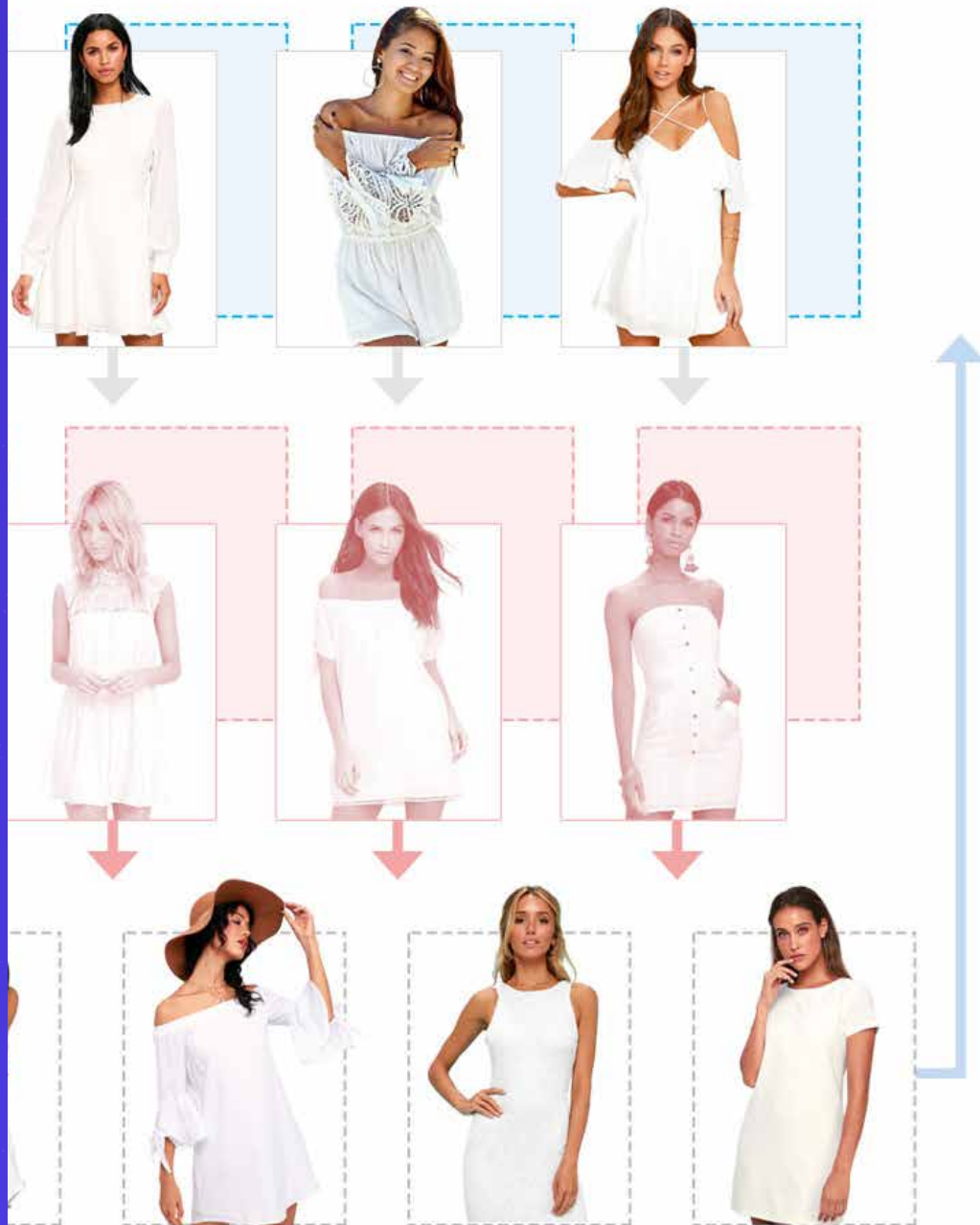
Demote the right products

Rotating products

Get a lot of repeat visitors?

Odds are good your regular shoppers are hoping to see something new and fresh.

Rotating products is a good way to ensure that your most valuable shoppers see something different the next time they visit your store – even when your product catalog hasn't flipped with new inventory yet.





Want to know more?

Product order and display is just one aspect of your merchandising strategy.

Banners and badges, landing pages and campaigns - it's a delicate balancing act that can define your brand experience.

Of course, all of these factors should also play nicely with your site navigation and product recommendations.

Did we mention reporting and analytics?

It sounds complicated, but it doesn't have to be.

Visit searchspring.com for more of our best practice guides, ecommerce content, and to learn how you can gain merchandising superpowers.