

If you are evaluating an SEO agency, “We’ll send you a monthly report” is not enough. Ask the agency to open your Google Analytics property and show you what changed, which channels contributed to business results, and how it knows its recommendations are working.

For a Shopify store, that conversation should connect organic search to **organic revenue**—not stop at rankings, impressions, or a screenshot of a traffic graph. It should also account for the limits of analytics data and the technical realities of your store, including apps, themes, and a growing catalog.

Use the questions below to make an agency demonstrate its thinking. You do not need to be a GA4 expert. You do need a clear baseline, a shared definition of success, and answers you can verify.

Start with the baseline, not the pitch

Before discussing future growth, ask the agency to show your current performance using the same date range, comparison period, and reporting setup. A recommendation without a baseline is a guess dressed up as a strategy.

- What date range are you using, and what period are you comparing it with?
- Are you looking at GA4 data, Shopify reports, or both?
- What is included in “organic search” in your report?
- Which revenue metric are you using, and how does it differ from Shopify’s sales reporting?
- Have you checked whether tracking changed during the period?

Ask the agency to explain any gaps between GA4 and Shopify. The systems can report different totals because of attribution rules, consent settings, time zones, refunds, payment flows, and tracking implementation. A competent agency should be able to explain the likely causes, identify what can be validated, and avoid treating either platform as a perfect source of truth.

Agree on the baseline before the agency starts work. Record organic sessions, purchases, conversion rate, revenue, average order value, and the main landing pages that generate organic sales. If tracking is unreliable, make fixing measurement a defined task rather than quietly building a growth forecast on questionable data.

Ask to see channel reporting that leads to business outcomes

In GA4, ask the agency to show channel reporting and explain how each channel is defined. Then ask it to follow the customer journey from acquisition to purchase. You want to understand what organic search contributes alongside paid search, direct, email, referral, and other channels—not hear that one channel “owns” every sale.

Useful views often include sessions or users by channel, purchases, revenue, and conversion rate. Ask whether the report uses a first-user or session-based acquisition view, or an attribution report. These answer different questions. First-user reporting describes how someone was originally acquired; session reporting describes the channel associated with a particular visit; attribution reports distribute credit across touchpoints according to a model.

Ask questions such as:

- How much organic revenue did the store record in this period, and how was that figure calculated?
- Which organic landing pages led to purchases or assisted conversions?

- Are branded and non-branded search performance being separated where possible?
- Which products or categories attract organic visits but rarely convert?
- What are the limits of the attribution view you are showing me?

Do not accept a report that celebrates impressions or sessions without connecting them to useful outcomes. More traffic can be valuable, but not if it is the wrong audience, lands on irrelevant pages, or does not contribute to sales. Rankings and search impressions can help explain what is happening; they are not a substitute for revenue, qualified visits, or a clear business case.

Make the agency explain a growth plateau

When growth stalls, “We need more content” is not a diagnosis. Ask the agency to show which part of the funnel has stopped improving and what evidence points to the cause. A plateau could come from weaker rankings, a limited search opportunity, lower conversion, stock availability, pricing, a tracking change, or technical issues after a theme or app update.

Request a comparison across three layers:

1. **Acquisition:** Are relevant organic visits declining, flat, or growing? Which landing pages and search intents are responsible?
2. **Engagement and conversion:** Do organic visitors reach product pages, add items to cart, and purchase at a similar rate to other channels?
3. **Revenue and product mix:** Is organic revenue changing because traffic changed, conversion changed, or the products being sold changed?

Ask the agency to identify the pages and product groups behind its conclusion. A store-wide average can hide a category that is gaining traction while another is losing visibility. It can also conceal a conversion problem on mobile or a drop affecting only a portion of the catalog.

A good diagnosis should separate observed facts from hypotheses. For example: “Organic sessions to these category pages fell after the redesign” is an observation. “The new theme caused the decline” is a hypothesis that needs supporting evidence, such as a release timeline, crawl checks, redirect review, or page-level performance analysis.

Understand Shopify’s SEO defaults—and what they do not solve

Shopify provides helpful foundations, but built-in features do not amount to a complete SEO strategy. Shopify includes SSL by default, which supports secure connections. It also generates an XML sitemap automatically, helping search engines discover eligible store URLs. Those are useful defaults, not proof that every important page is accessible, indexed, or performing well.

Ask the agency to show what it has checked beyond the defaults:

- Are key collections, products, and informational pages indexable and internally linked?
- Are there duplicate, thin, discontinued, or out-of-stock URLs that need a deliberate plan?
- Are canonical tags, redirects, metadata, and structured data behaving as intended?
- Do collection filters or app-generated pages create crawl paths that should be reviewed?
- Does the sitemap contain the pages you want discovered, and are important pages missing from it?

Shopify Plus does not automatically remove these SEO challenges. It can support more complex commerce operations, but the store still needs a sound information architecture, accurate tracking, clean templates, and consistent implementation. The agency should describe the actual work required in your store, not imply that the platform tier guarantees SEO performance.

Ask about technical debt from apps and themes

Shopify stores often accumulate technical debt gradually. An app is installed for a promotion, another adds reviews, and a theme customization is made to solve a short-term merchandising need. Over time, scripts, duplicate features, inconsistent templates, or fragile custom code can affect performance and make changes harder to maintain.

Ask the agency to show how it will audit the current setup and how findings will become accountable work. Useful questions include:

- Which apps add code or scripts to the storefront, and how will you determine whether each is still needed?
- What theme changes or customizations could affect SEO, tracking, or page performance?
- How will you test changes before publishing them?
- Who approves app removals, theme edits, redirects, and tracking changes?
- How will you document fixes so future theme updates do not reintroduce the issue?

Do not accept a vague promise of “ongoing optimization.” Ask for named tasks, owners, timing, acceptance criteria, and dependencies. For example, “audit storefront scripts and document redundant app functionality” is more useful than “improve technical SEO.” Likewise, ask whether development work is included, estimated separately, or dependent on your team.

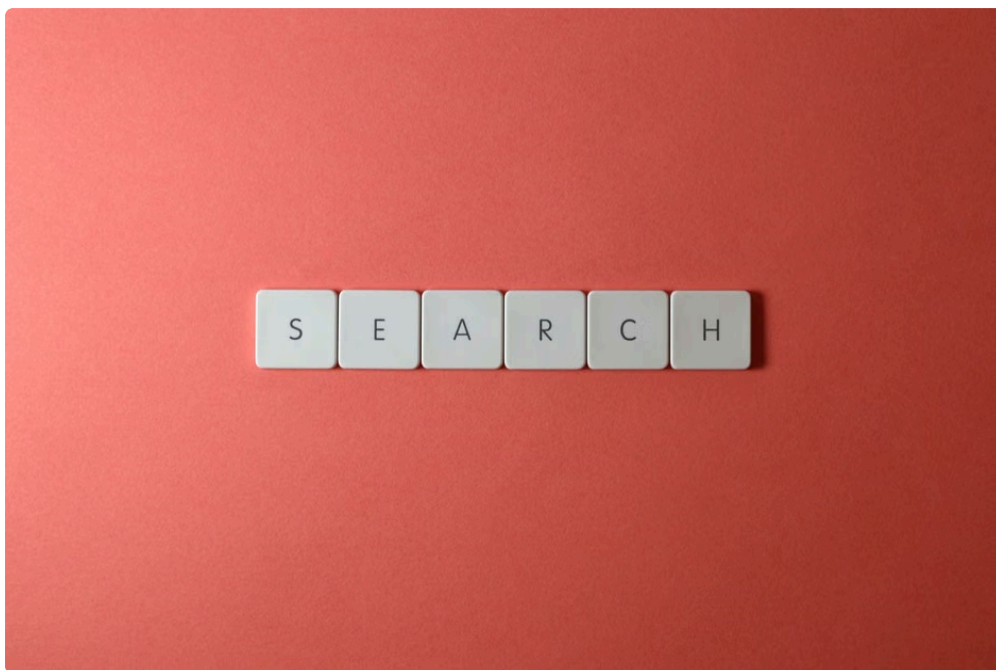
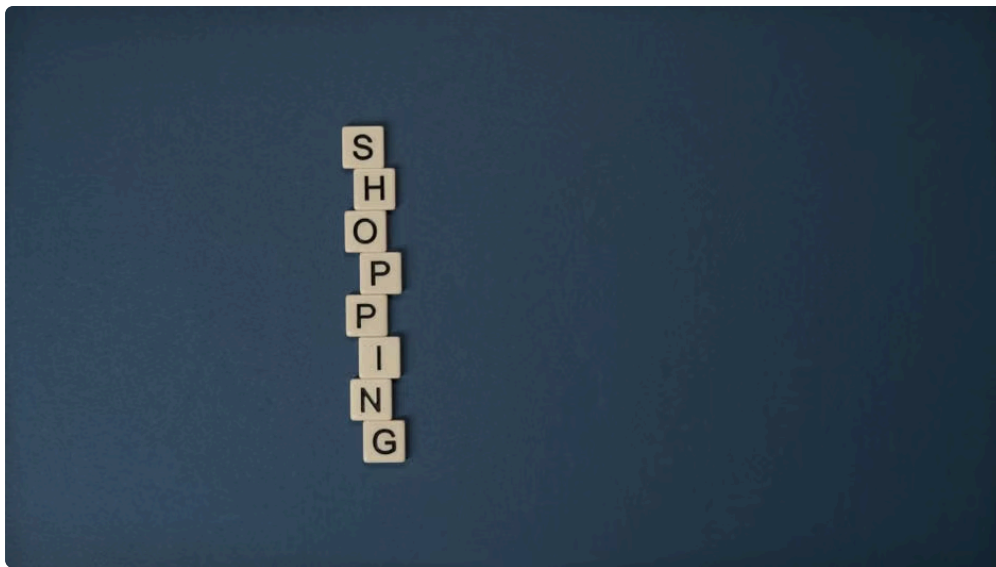
Test whether the strategy can handle SKU scale

A store with a small catalog can often manage product links and navigation by hand. As SKU count grows, consistency becomes difficult. New products may be published without links from relevant collections or guides. Similar products may compete for the same search intent, while discontinued items may leave broken paths or useful URLs without a plan.

Ask the agency to show how it will audit internal linking at your catalog’s scale. It should be able to explain how it will prioritize links [onelittleweb](#) between collections, products, buying guides, and other useful content. Ask how new SKUs enter that system and who maintains it when the catalog changes.

For instance, an agency might propose rules for linking related products from a collection, linking buying guides to the right product groups, and linking products back to relevant collections. The exact approach depends on your catalog, theme, and merchandising needs. The important point is that it should be repeatable, not dependent on someone remembering every link by hand.

Ask the agency to show a sample of the URLs it checked and the criteria it used to prioritize them. That makes the recommendation verifiable and helps prevent a “sitewide internal linking improvement” from remaining an undefined deliverable.



Give access safely and keep ownership of your data

When an agency requests **GA access**, ask which Google account needs access, what permission level it requires, and why. Grant the minimum access needed to do the agreed work. Do not share passwords. Keep the Google Analytics property, Google Tag Manager container, and related accounts under your business's ownership, and make sure you have an internal administrator who can manage access.

Ask the agency to review the current GA4 configuration before making changes. This may include checking the measurement setup, key events, referral exclusions, cross-domain behavior where relevant, and whether purchases are being recorded consistently. Changes should be documented, tested, and approved according to an agreed process.

If an agency says it needs unrestricted access but cannot explain why, pause and ask for specifics. The same applies if you cannot see the property, export the data, or revoke access at the end of the relationship.

Use this checklist in your next agency call

Ask the agency to show What a useful answer includes A performance baseline Date ranges, comparison periods, data sources, and known tracking limitations Channel reporting Organic search alongside other channels, with attribution definitions explained Organic revenue analysis Revenue trends connected to landing pages, products, and conversion behavior A plateau diagnosis Evidence that separates traffic, conversion, revenue mix, and technical causes A technical and catalog plan Specific app, theme, crawl, and internal linking tasks with owners and acceptance criteria

What a credible agency conversation sounds like

A credible agency will explain what it can prove, what it cannot, and what it needs to investigate. It will not guarantee rankings or promise a precise revenue increase before establishing a baseline. It will show its work, explain its assumptions, and make clear which recommendations depend on your developers, merchandising team, or platform configuration.

Companies such as OneLittleWeb may be part of your agency research, but judge any provider by the same standard: Can it connect the proposed work to your store's data, explain where its conclusions come from, and define what it will deliver? Ask who will actually manage the account, how often you will review results, and whether you will see the underlying data—not just polished screenshots.

The best agency report is not the one with the most charts. It is the one that helps you decide what to do next, shows whether previous work changed the right outcomes, and leaves you able to verify the evidence yourself.