



The Global Language of Business

Optimise your listings and make them perform better on Amazon



Selling on Amazon

Amazon's mission statement is 'to be Earth's most customer-centric company, where customers can find and discover anything'. They want to offer the best service, prices, delivery and buying experience on the web, which is why Amazon sets such exacting standards for their third party merchants.

Amazon is a very different marketplace to others, such as eBay or Etsy, where you own your own listing. On Amazon, sellers list against a single product detail page, effectively one listing with multiple offers from all sellers who have listed that item for sale. Having a single product detail page means that price may often be the deciding factor, which is why many sellers use repricing software to keep their current sale price competitive.

For Amazon sellers, the aim is to win the buy box, which is the offer Amazon picks as the recommended offer. Other sellers' offers are still available, but shoppers have to work harder to access them.

This guide will look at how to make your Amazon listings work as effectively as possible – and how to win the buy box most of the time.

The screenshot displays the Amazon product page interface. At the top, there is a checkbox for 'Yes, I want a free trial with FREE One-Day Delivery on this order.' with the Amazon Prime logo. Below this is a quantity selector set to '1' and a prominent yellow 'Add to Basket' button. A link for 'Turn on 1-Click ordering' is visible. The 'Dispatch to:' section shows 'UK - Mainland' with a dropdown arrow and an 'Add to List' button. Below this is the 'Other Sellers on Amazon' section, which lists three alternative offers, each with a price of £39.99 and an 'Add to Basket' button. The first offer is from 'Lake Home and Leisure' with '+ FREE UK delivery'. The second is from 'Lakeland' with '+ FREE UK delivery'. The third is from 'Radfan - Direct' with '+ £2.84 UK delivery'. At the bottom of this section, it says '5 new from £39.99'. A dark blue bar at the very bottom of the screenshot contains the text 'Buy box'.



Optimising an Amazon listing

1. Single product detail page and ASINs

Each product listed on Amazon is assigned a unique code, known as the Amazon Standard Identification Number (ASIN).

An ASIN is a 10-character alphanumeric unique identifier that Amazon uses internally to uniquely identify each product. As these identifiers are assigned to each single product detail page, all sellers of the same product should list against the same ASIN.

The first thing you need to check when listing your product is whether it's already listed under an existing ASIN. If it is, you should list your product on that detail page. However, the product details may not be as comprehensive as you'd like, so you may want to consider the advice in this guide and submit changes to Amazon, which if approved will then become a part of the product detail page for that ASIN.

If your product hasn't previously appeared on Amazon, you'll need to create your own listing, which Amazon will generate a new ASIN for. You'll then 'own' that

ASIN and can make sure the listing is as effective as possible, as you'll be able to optimise all of the product information and images. But be aware that if other sellers list against your ASIN, they may also submit revisions.

As an ASIN is a unique identifier for Amazon, they're not recognised outside Amazon. Even on Amazon websites in different countries you may find the same product with two different ASINs - so check when listing on international Amazon sites that the product you're selling is indeed the product the ASIN applies to. The best way to do this is to verify the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN), a unique globally recognised product identifier.



2. Product identification

One of the most important attributes you'll need to enter under vital information is the product identifier. This will normally be the GTIN.

GTINs are a series of numbers assigned to most retail products. They're also commonly known as European Article Numbers (EANs), Universal Product Code (UPC) - used in North America - and Japanese Article Number (JAN) - used in Japan.

When you enter your product identifier onto Amazon you'll also need to select the type of GTIN you're entering from the drop down list. Your supplier or manufacturer may already supply GTINs for your products, but if you sell your own branded products then you'll need to assign your own GTINs, which can be obtained from a GS1 organisation.

or GTINs that are recognised not only on Amazon, but throughout your entire supply chain and on all the marketplaces, website and retail outlets you supply your products to.



Register your brand with Amazon for increased control over your products' titles, details, images and other attributes.



If you're selling books, you'll need to use International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs).

GS1 is the not-for-profit membership organisation that's been providing global identification standards for over 40 years. GS1 is the only issuer of EANs, UPCs

By listing your offers on Amazon with globally recognised EANs, UPCs or GTINs, your Amazon listings are more likely to be indexed by Google and shopping comparison sites to drive traffic and more sales.

In addition to the ASIN, Amazon also has a non-standard product identifier available to brand owners, the Global Catalogue Identifiers (GCIDs), which will be assigned to your products if you apply to Amazon's Brand Registry.



Product identifiers on Amazon

- ASIN** Alphanumeric identifier that is assigned to each single product detail page on Amazon
- EAN** The 13-digit number you find underneath a barcode that identifies a product uniquely anywhere in the world. This is the product identifier you usually assign to your products through your GS1 UK membership
- UPC** A 12-digit number that is equivalent to a 13-digit EAN, normally found in use in North America. If you require a UPC to trade with a partner in the US you can get your UPC numbers from GS1 UK
- GCID** Amazon's own identifier for products registered by the brand owner in the Amazon brand registry
- GTIN** Here Amazon are referring to a 14 digit number that you use to depict a case of your products. You can also assign these numbers to your cases through your GS1 UK membership

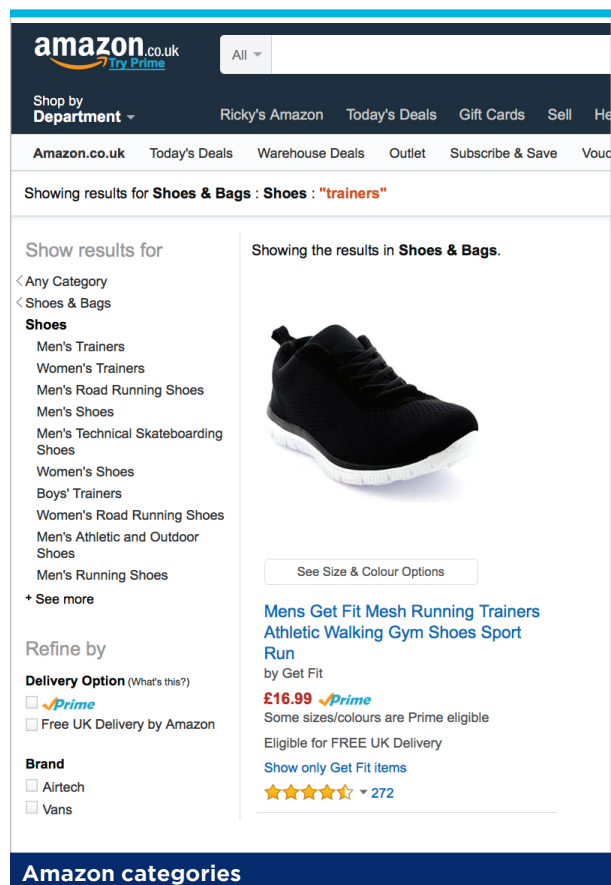
Instead of being tied to a product listing like the ASIN, the GCID is directly related to a product, which means that it cannot change over time or become merged with other products.

A GCID gives you greater control over your product detail pages, although it doesn't appear on the product detail pages or in your listings. GCIDs, like ASINs, are specific to Amazon and not a replacement for a globally recognised GTIN.

3. Categorising your product

The first thing Amazon requires you to do is to categorise your product. Shoppers may use product categories as a way to narrow their search.

For instance, if a shopper uses the search term 'trainers', they may want to further narrow this into men's trainers or women's trainers. If your product isn't correctly categorised it will be removed from the products presented to the shopper.



4. Entering product and listing information

Vital info

The first section you'll need to complete is what Amazon refers to as **vital info**. Depending on the category you're listing in, some of the **vital info** will be mandatory such as **product name, brand, colour, size, department and product identifier**. Other **vital info** is optional, but if an attribute applies to your product it's essential that you complete the field.

Amazon uses this **vital info** to build the bullet points that you'll see at the top of every Amazon product detail page.



The **product name** is your listing's title. Amazon will be limiting them to 200 characters. They also prefer the first letter of each word to be capitalised.

More details

Amazon also have a tab when creating a listing for **more details**, which includes additional product attributes that can assist the buyer in making their purchase, such as the **manufacturer's model name, weight, dimensions**.

amazon services
seller central

Vital Info Variations Offer Images Description Keywords More Details Advanced View

All Product Categories > Shoes & Bags > Shoes > Men's Shoes > Boots

- * Product Name: Ex: parent sku title: "Kenneth Cole REACTIONWomen's Work Space"
- * Brand: Ex: Skechers
- * Colour: Ex: Navy Blue
- Colour Map: Ex: green
- * Size: Ex: 10 M US Men7 M US Women43 EU / 10 US Men5 M US Toddler
- * Size Map: Ex: X-Small
- * Department: Ex: womens
Add More Remove Last
- Sole Material: Ex: cork
- Heel Type: Ex: Stiletto
- Strap Type: Ex: ankle-wrap
- Arch Type: Ex: Medium
- Water Resistance Level: - Select -
- Shaft Height: Ex: Knee-High
- Heel Height: - Select -
- lining-description: Ex: with warm lining
- * Product ID: - Select -

Amazon's vital product information

Maps

Amazon use **maps** to relate product or manufacturer specific values to more generic values that shoppers are likely to use when searching.

You'll find these for attributes such as **colour** and **size**. This allows you to enter the attribute specified by the manufacturer but at the same time tell Amazon the standard value it equates to.

As an example, you may be listing a product that is described as 'navy blue' in **colour**, but shoppers may not search for specifically a navy blue coloured item of clothing, so you should map this to just 'blue'. So, you'd enter the non-standard navy blue as the colour and then in the **colour map** you'd include the standard colour blue to ensure that your item is surfaced in search.

Map specific values to an attribute

! Use **maps** to indicate the standard value for non-standard product attributes. Think like a shopper and map all attributes to the most common colour or size that they would enter as a search term.

Model year

Amazon recognises that products are updated over time but that manufacturers don't always change their product names to reflect this. To account for this you can specify the **model year** of your product. This enables you to create a new ASIN so that your product can be

Product's model year

Variations

Stock Keeping Unit (SKU)

If you're adding a product with variations, such as different sizes or colours of the same product, you'll be able to add SKU codes, and be able to identify exactly which variation has been sold.

! Use the manufacturer's product codes as SKUs rather than creating your own. Each SKU will have its own EAN, which will uniquely identify it in your own inventory records.

Stocks keeping unit's (SKUs) for each product variation

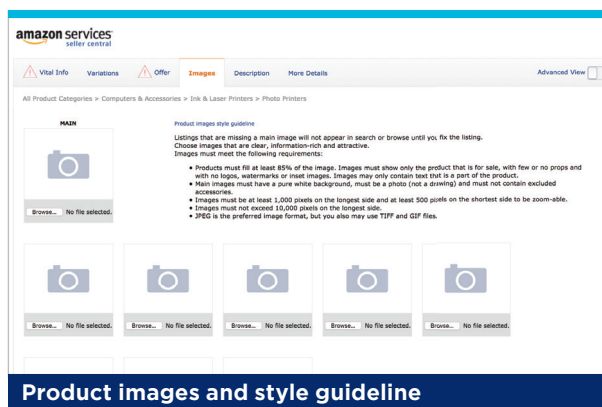
Size	Size Map	Seller SKU	Product ID	Product ID Type	Condition	Your price	Quantity
<input type="checkbox"/>					New	£	
<input type="checkbox"/> small				- Select -	New	£	
<input type="checkbox"/> medium				- Select -	New	£	
<input type="checkbox"/> large				- Select -	New	£	

Images

Amazon allows you to add up to nine images for your product, which should be on pure white backgrounds.

Images must meet the following requirements:

- Products must fill at least 85% of the image. Images must show only the product that is for sale, with few or no props and with no logos, watermarks or inset images. Images may only contain text that is a part of the product.
- Main images must have a pure white background, must be a photo (not a drawing) and must not contain excluded accessories.
- Images must be at least 1,000 pixels on the longest side and at least 500 pixels on the shortest side to be zoom-able.
- Images must not exceed 10,000 pixels on the longest side.
- JPEG is the preferred image format, but you also may use TIFF and GIF files.



In some categories Amazon has style guides. Check to see what the standard format is before listing. For example, shoes and handbags and clothing.

In the shoe categories the main image should be from above with the toe of the shoe facing right, followed by up to eight additional images. Amazon suggests six of these images should be:

1. The front shot is to be photographed directly in front of the shoe
2. The back shot is to be photographed directly into the rear of the shoe
3. The bottom shot is to be photographed directly into the bottom of the shoe, with the toe of the shoe pointing to the right, whether the logo is visible or not
4. The left shot is to be photographed at a 90-degree view from the same slightly-above height as the main shot, with the toe of the shoe facing left
5. The right shot is to be photographed at a 90-degree view with the toe of the shoe facing right
6. The top shot is to be photographed directly into the top of the shoe, with the shoe pointing to the right

Description

Amazon's **product description** is somewhat less important than on other marketplaces as the main product details are created from the vital info that you've previously entered. It also appears much lower down the page, or via a click on mobile.

There's no need to include technical information about the product in the description as this should all be included in the vital info. But this gives you more scope to describe the benefits and how your product is to be used.

Keywords

Amazon has an additional keyword section in the listing creation process which might seem trivial, but has a great influence in attracting more shoppers to your products. It's easy to fill out some relevant keywords that spring to mind as you're close to finishing your listing, but this is one place that's really worth investing your time in.

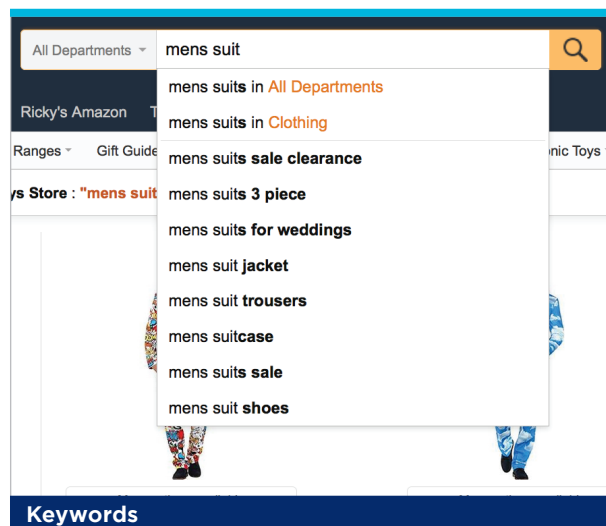
The keywords are alphanumeric terms which shoppers may search for. A shopper might specify 'work boots' or they may even be more specific and search for 'men's work boots'. Spend time filling in as many keyword strings as are relevant to your products.



Use keyword suggestion tools such as Google Keyword Planner to find commonly searched for phrases.

You can also simply search for the product on Amazon and use Amazon's own auto-complete suggestions. These are based on the most popular shopper searches on Amazon so you know they're going to be effective for your product.

Each string of keywords you enter should be separated by a comma.

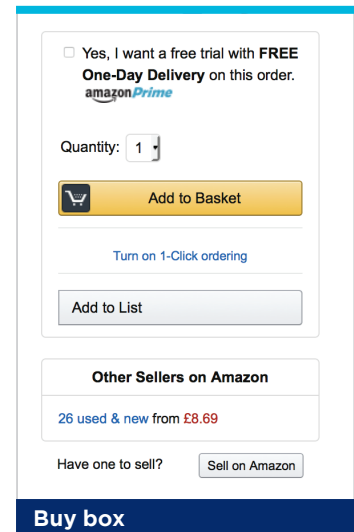


Winning the Buy Box most of the time

A key feature of Amazon is that the same product can be sold by several sellers. If several sellers offer the same product in “new” condition, they may be eligible to compete for the buy box for that product.

Winning the buy box means that if a shopper clicks the add to basket or buy now button they’ve made the purchase from you. On a desktop two alternative sellers’ offers are shown, but on a mobile the only offer displayed is the buy box winner’s. Offers from other sellers are hidden below in a tab which shoppers may not even scroll far enough to see. This naturally means that whoever wins the buy box gets the majority of sales.

A seller’s eligibility to win the buy box is tied to their seller performance, so how do you improve your chances of success?



1. Price

Amazon looks at the total cost a shopper will pay for your product, which includes the selling price of the product and the standard delivery cost. You may have a lower item price than your competitors, but if your total cost is higher you’re less likely to win the buy box.

Having the lowest price doesn’t guarantee that you’ll win the buy box, but it’s an important factor.

2. Availability

Amazon knows that the seller who wins the buy box will receive a large number of orders so they prefer sellers who have deep inventory. If you only have a couple of items in stock, it’s likely that Amazon will award the buy box to a competitor with a larger number of products available as they’ll be able to fulfil more orders.

3. Shipping options

Amazon offers multiple delivery choices because they believe that’s what shoppers want. They offer expedited, standard and SuperSaver delivery choices. However they also offer Next day timed delivery, same day delivery, locker delivery, click and collect and a host of other options. As they prefer listings with multiple shipping options, the more delivery options you can offer the more likely you are to win the buy box.

Amazon also considers your despatch times. The shorter time you specify as needed between receiving an order and shipping the item the better your chances of winning the buy box.



Use multichannel management software to list your entire inventory on all of the marketplaces you trade on. Available quantities can then be adjusted as products sell or when you receive new deliveries from suppliers.

4. Fulfilment by Amazon

Fulfilment by Amazon (FBA) is the biggest factor in determining who wins the buy box. FBA entails you placing your stock in one of Amazon's warehouses and allowing them to store, pick, pack and ship your products for you.

FBA can especially help if your Order Defect Rate (ODR) is less than optimal. As Amazon stores your products, they know that you won't be out of stock. And as it's them who pick, pack and ship your items they also know that the despatch time will be fast. Amazon also offer an array of delivery choices with their own Amazon logistics service and third party couriers – so they're more likely to offer more delivery choices than an independent seller.

Possibly the biggest uplift in sales from FBA is from Amazon's ever growing pool of Amazon Prime customers. With a Prime subscription, shoppers get unlimited free next day delivery of products fulfilled by Amazon. By placing your products into FBA your products will be included in Amazon's prime membership free delivery programme – so will be preferred by prime customers.



Using FBA is one of the easiest ways to increase your sales on Amazon. Amazon UK state that “85% of Amazon sellers say they saw a sales increase, and 53% reported a sales uplift of over 20% or more after they started using FBA”.

Amazon FBA fees will vary based on the type, weight and size of the product you're selling. Once you sign up for FBA you'll be able to send your first shipment into Amazon's warehouse and they'll start picking, packing and shipping your orders for you.

5. Seller metrics

Amazon considers your ODR when deciding if you should win the buy box. Your ODR is based on your seller metrics – feedback, A-Z claims and charge backs. The better your seller metrics are, the higher your chances of winning the buy box.

Final thoughts

Without a doubt the best ways to increase your sales on Amazon are for your products to be easily found, and to win the buy box so you're the default merchant every time a buyer clicks the buy button.

To be found you need to optimise your listings for Amazon search by completing all the fields that Amazon provides, including completing keywords and mapping product specific colours and sizes to the generic colours and sizes that buyers will search for.

Once you've optimised your listings you'll then want to ensure you win the buy box as often as possible. Having great seller metrics by providing top quality service counts, but placing your products into FBA and letting Amazon handle the distribution of your product is the most effective way to boost your chance of winning it.

Checklist for optimising listings on Amazon

- Ensure the ASIN matches the GTIN
- Ensure the relevant GTIN is entered as the product ID
- Complete every section of the **vital info** which Amazon uses to build a listing's bullet point description
- Use **maps** to link product specific attributes to more generic attributes that shoppers may search for
- Specify the **model year** if it's applicable
- If you are a brand owner apply for an Amazon GCID
- Ensure that all SKUs are mapped to EANs
- Tailor your images to Amazon's style guidelines
- Include features and benefits in your **product description**
- Take time to research keywords – this can really boost visibility for your product
- Focus on price, availability and shipping options to make your product offering more attractive
- Consider placing product in FBA to boost your chances of winning the **buy box**
- Monitor your seller metrics to understand where you need to improve

Want to know more?

You can find help and guidance for your marketplace listings at **www.gs1uk.org/marketplaces**

Contact us

GS1 UK

Staple Court,
11 Staple Inn Buildings
London WC1V 7QH

T +44 (0)20 7092 3500

F +44 (0)20 7681 2290

E support@gs1uk.org

Member Support Team 0808 178 8799

www.gs1uk.org.uk

