

Two Shopify SEO proposals can look equally convincing while promising very different amounts of work. One may include a real technical audit, specific fixes, and a plan tied to revenue. The other may package a few routine checks, vague “ongoing optimization,” and monthly screenshots as a complete SEO program.

The difference is not always obvious from the price or the length of the proposal. To compare them fairly, look at the scope comparison, the deliverables list, and the relationship between pricing and output. Then check whether the provider understands Shopify’s defaults, your store’s specific problems, and the commercial results you need.

This guide gives you a practical way to evaluate two proposals without getting distracted by guaranteed rankings, impressive-looking reports, or promises that never explain who will do the work.

Start With Your Baseline, Not the Proposal

Before asking which proposal is better, establish what is happening now. Without a baseline, an agency can claim progress without showing whether it improved organic sales, fixed a technical problem, or simply recorded more impressions.

Gather at least 6–12 months of data where possible, including:

- Organic sessions and landing-page performance from Google Analytics or your analytics platform.
- Organic revenue, transactions, and conversion rate, segmented as reliably as your setup allows.
- Search clicks, impressions, and queries from Google Search Console.
- Current rankings for commercially important product and category searches, if tracked consistently.
- Indexed-page counts, crawl or coverage issues, and sitemap status.
- Recent changes to your Shopify theme, apps, URL structure, product catalog, or international setup.

Impressions and rankings can help diagnose visibility, but neither is a business outcome by itself. A proposal that highlights impressions without connecting them to qualified traffic, conversions, or revenue is not giving you the full picture.

Ask both providers to state what baseline they will use, which data sources they need, and how they will handle seasonality, promotions, and tracking limitations. If the proposal recommends a major investment before looking at your actual data, ask what evidence supports the recommendation.

Separate Shopify Defaults From the Work You Actually Need

Shopify provides useful SEO infrastructure out of the box. Shopify includes SSL by default, and the platform creates an auto-generated sitemap. Those are helpful defaults, but they are not a complete SEO strategy—and a provider should not sell basic platform features as if they were custom work.

In practical terms, Shopify’s defaults do not tell you whether your most valuable collections are organized well, whether product pages answer buyers’ questions, or whether your internal links help shoppers and search engines navigate a large catalog. They also do not automatically resolve every issue introduced by a theme, app, custom implementation, or past migration.

Ask each provider to distinguish among:

- **Platform defaults:** Features already supplied by Shopify, such as SSL and the auto-generated sitemap.

- **Configuration and quality checks:** Verifying that important pages are accessible, crawlable, canonicalized appropriately, and represented correctly in search.
- **Store-specific work:** Fixing problems caused by your theme, apps, catalog structure, content, or growth plans.

This distinction matters particularly if your store is on Shopify Plus. Plus may support more complex operations and customization, but it does not make SEO problems disappear. The proposal should explain the actual storefront, theme, integrations, and catalog it will work on—not rely on the Plus name as shorthand for a complete technical solution.

Compare the Scope, Not Just the Price

A useful scope comparison shows what each provider will do, why it matters, and what you will receive. “Technical SEO,” “content support,” and “ongoing optimization” are categories, not deliverables. Ask for the concrete work behind each phrase.

Proposal area	What to look for	Questions to ask	Technical audit	Prioritized findings tied to affected templates or URLs
Which issues will you fix, and which will you only report?	Implementation	Named changes, responsible owner, and testing process	Who makes the changes, and how are they checked before release?	Content and on-page work
Specific pages, briefs, updates, or templates	How many pages are included, and what does “optimized” mean?	Reporting	Revenue and conversion context alongside search data	Which decisions will this report help us make?
Authority and links	Clear methods, review standards, and source transparency	Can we see and approve the sites and placements?		

For every line item, check whether the provider is auditing, recommending, implementing, or monitoring. Those are different levels of service. An audit that identifies a theme issue is not the same as fixing it; a recommendation to improve category content is not the same as delivering an approved brief or revised copy.

Evaluate the Deliverables List

A strong deliverables list should let you picture what will happen during the first month, the first quarter, and after that. It should name the output, the cadence, and the person or team responsible.

For example, “technical SEO support” is too vague on its own. A clearer deliverable might say that the provider will review indexation and canonical behavior on specified Shopify templates, document prioritized findings, implement agreed fixes in a staging theme, and provide a post-release validation summary. The details will vary by store, but the standard should be clear enough to hold both sides accountable.

Ask the provider to define phrases such as “content optimization,” “link building,” and “ongoing optimization.” If a monthly retainer includes a set number of hours, ask how those hours are allocated. If it does not, ask what work you can expect each month and how priorities change when urgent technical issues arise.

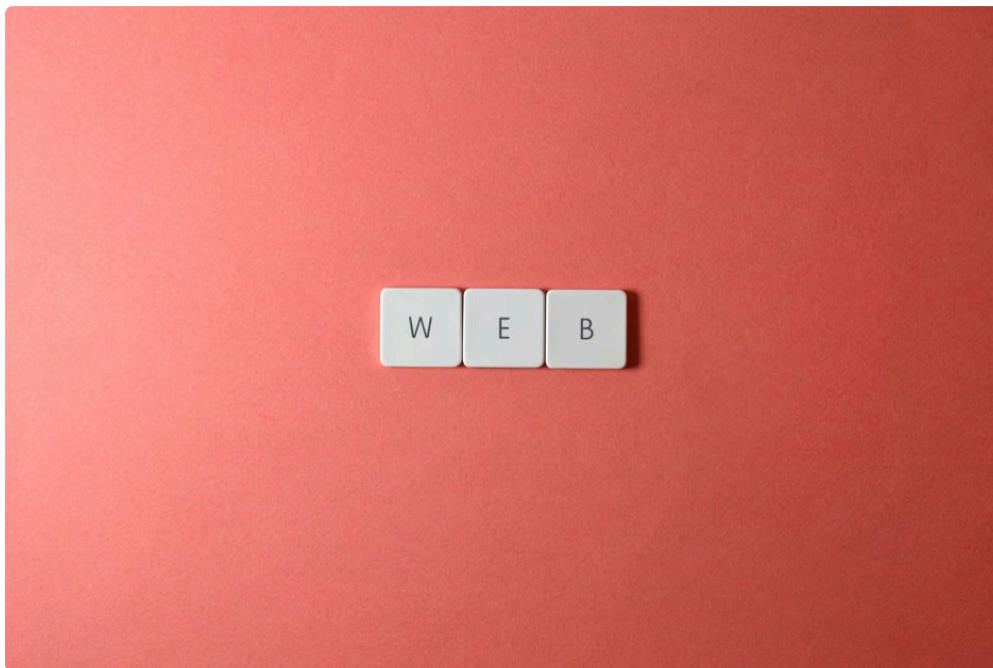
It is also reasonable to ask who will manage your account after the sale. Find out who does the analysis, who implements changes, and who answers day-to-day questions. A polished discovery call is not proof that the senior strategist will remain involved. Clear ownership helps avoid a bait-and-switch in which the experienced salesperson disappears and your work gets handed to an unexplained team.

Investigate Technical Debt From Apps and Themes

Shopify stores often accumulate technical debt gradually. A new app is installed for reviews, filters, subscriptions, pop-ups, or merchandising. A theme is customized, replaced, or partially rolled back. A marketing campaign adds scripts. Each change may seem small, but the combined storefront can become slower, harder to maintain, or inconsistent across templates.

A credible proposal should examine how your actual theme and app stack affect organic search and user experience. It should not assume that every app is harmful or recommend removing tools without understanding their business purpose. Instead, ask how the provider will identify unnecessary scripts, duplicated functionality, rendering issues, broken structured data, and changes that affect important page templates.

Check whether the proposal includes coordination with your developer or internal team. SEO recommendations that cannot be implemented—or that are pushed live without testing—do not create value. For a theme change or larger technical release, ask how the provider will protect existing URLs, metadata, internal links, and tracking, and how the team will verify the result after launch.



Diagnose a Growth Plateau Before Buying More Activity

If organic growth has stalled, more content or more links may not be the right answer. The plateau could come from many different causes: category pages competing with each other, products that are difficult to discover, a change in demand, weak conversion rates, technical issues, or a catalog that has outgrown its navigation.

Ask each provider to explain how it will diagnose the plateau. A useful analysis separates the problem into questions:

- Has organic traffic declined, stayed flat, or grown while revenue lagged?
- Are losses concentrated on certain collections, product types, devices, or markets?
- Are important pages indexed and receiving relevant search clicks?
- Are visitors arriving on pages that match their intent and offer a clear path to purchase?
- Did a site, theme, app, catalog, or analytics change happen around the time performance shifted?

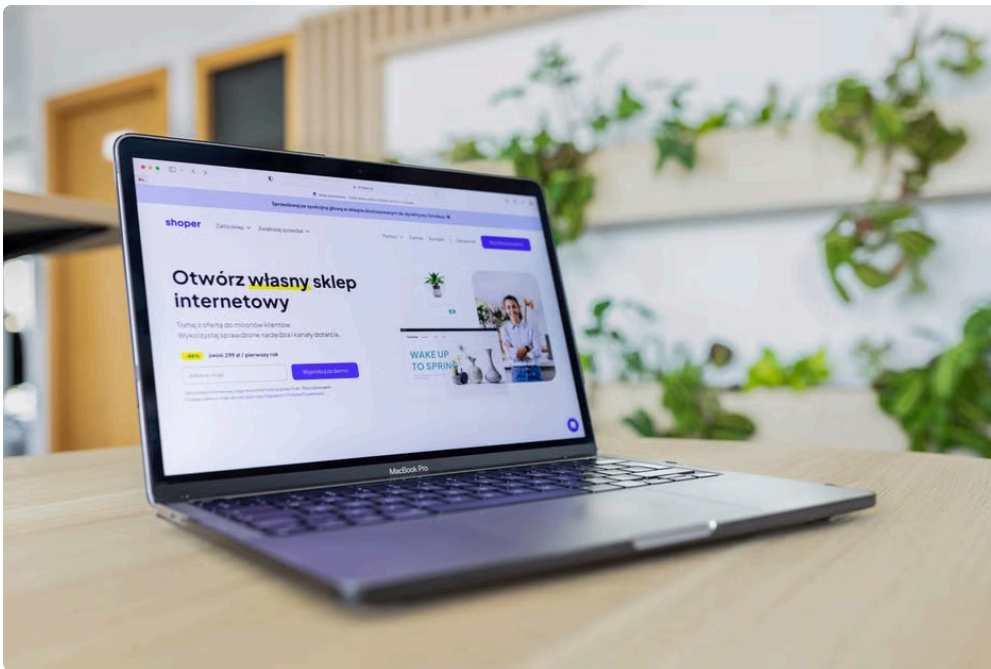
These questions help distinguish a visibility problem from a conversion problem. If organic sessions are increasing but sales are not, the proposal should not automatically celebrate the traffic trend. It should investigate landing-

page relevance, merchandising, speed, usability, and measurement before recommending more top-of-funnel content.

Check SKU Scale and Internal Linking Consistency

SEO work that is adequate for a small catalog may not hold up when a store has thousands of SKUs, many variants, or overlapping collections. At scale, inconsistent product naming, thin collection pages, duplicate or near-duplicate descriptions, and weak discovery paths can compound across the site.

Ask how the provider will group pages by template and business value instead of treating every URL as an isolated task. A practical plan may prioritize high-revenue collections, strategic product groups, and pages with clear organic opportunity. It should also explain how the team will handle out-of-stock items, discontinued products, variants, and products that belong to multiple collections.



Internal linking deserves specific attention. On Shopify, menus, breadcrumbs, collection pages, related products, and editorial content can all help connect the catalog. But links should be consistent and useful, not added indiscriminately to hit a link-count target.

Ask each provider how it will assess whether:

- Important collections can be reached through clear navigation paths.
- Products link back to relevant collections or related products where appropriate.
- Editorial pages support relevant categories without creating awkward keyword-heavy links.
- Large catalogs leave valuable products buried too deeply or disconnected from useful pages.
- Automated rules create inconsistent or irrelevant links at scale.

The answer should reflect your SKU structure and merchandising needs. A generic promise to “improve internal linking” is not enough to show that the provider understands your store.

Compare Pricing vs Output

When comparing pricing vs output, do not assume the cheaper proposal is the better value—or that the more expensive one includes more implementation. Put the deliverables side by side and estimate the actual effort,

expertise, and accountability behind each one.

A useful comparison sheet might include:

1. One-time audit and strategy work.
2. Monthly implementation hours or clearly defined monthly outputs.
3. Content briefs, writing, editing, and publishing responsibilities.
4. Developer coordination and technical QA.
5. Reporting, meetings, and access to the people doing the work.
6. Any extra costs for tools, development, link placements, or out-of-scope requests.

Look for mismatches. A proposal might charge for a substantial strategy phase but leave all fixes to your team. Another might include implementation but only for a small number of pages. Neither is automatically wrong, but you should know what you are buying and what additional resources you will need.

For perspective, compare providers such as OneLittleWeb—or any other agency you are considering—using the same questions and the same baseline. The goal is not to reward the proposal with the most pages or the biggest promise. It is to understand which team can address your actual constraints and show its work.

Red Flags That Should Slow You Down

- **Guaranteed rankings:** No provider can control search engines or promise a specific position.
- **Vague recurring work:** “Ongoing optimization” needs a defined cadence, owner, and output.
- **Impressions-only success stories:** Ask for context on clicks, conversions, revenue, and attribution limitations.
- **Unexplained link building:** Providers should explain how links are sourced, assessed, and reported. Ask to review sources and methods.
- **Platform basics sold as custom work:** Shopify’s SSL and auto-generated sitemap are defaults, not a tailored SEO program.
- **Recommendations without implementation details:** Find out who will make changes, test them, and confirm they worked.
- **Pressure to sign before reviewing data:** A useful plan starts with your store and baseline, not a preset package alone.

A Simple Decision Process

Before choosing, send both providers the same follow-up questions and request written answers. Ask what the first 90 days would include, which issues they would prioritize, what they need from your team, and how they will report outcomes. Ask for examples of similar Shopify challenges, not just general claims about rankings or traffic growth.

Then score each proposal on clarity, relevance, implementation capacity, measurement, and fit with your catalog and technical setup. You can use a simple 1–5 scale, but write down why you gave each score. This makes it harder to let a low price, familiar brand, or persuasive presentation substitute for evidence.

The better Shopify SEO proposal is the one that connects a documented baseline to specific work, realistic ownership, and meaningful [AI search](#) business measures. It explains what Shopify already handles, what your store still needs, and how the provider will address technical debt, growth plateaus, SKU scale, and internal linking. If you

cannot tell what will be delivered, who will deliver it, and how you will judge the result, ask for clarification before you sign.