

SALSIFY | Ebook

# HOW TO WRITE **TOP-PERFORMING** **B2B PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS**

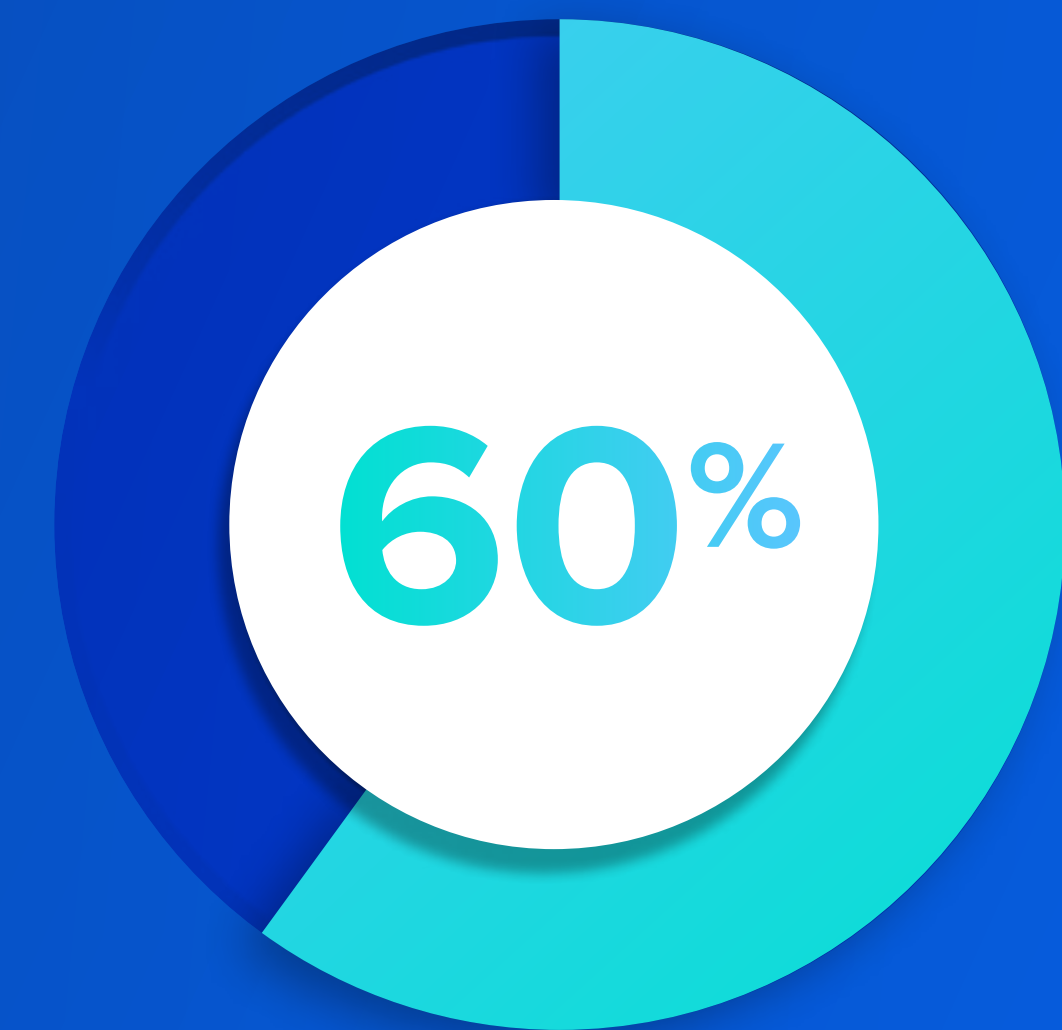
# PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS ARE KEY TO DIGITAL SHELF SUCCESS

According to Google, **now over 60% of shopping experiences start with online research**. As shopping moves to digital-first, how is your site optimizing for your visitors to research, compare and purchase products? If you are a manufacturer, how can your digital ecosystem compete with other sites, marketplaces, and brands? For your partners and distributors, how can you provide consistent customer experiences at all touchpoints?

B2B purchasers go through a different purchase process than B2C consumers. While B2C shoppers browse, research, and purchase relatively quickly, the B2B buyers may be visiting your site to do something less direct. They may be browsing to research products, compare pricing, start a quote, place an order, or to make a recommendation for purchase.

In each instance, they need information that helps them get their job done as quickly and correctly as possible. For B2B digital shelf success, your product information has to be specific to your customers, compelling, correct, and consistent. This helps your B2B customers get their job done as painlessly as possible.

To accomplish this, you'll need to dig deep to uncover your knowledge of your customers, your products, and how your customers engage your brand. In this Ebook, we'll focus on your product descriptions, and how you can optimize them to **support research, deepen brand engagement, and drive conversions**.



**Over 60% of shopping experiences** start with online research.

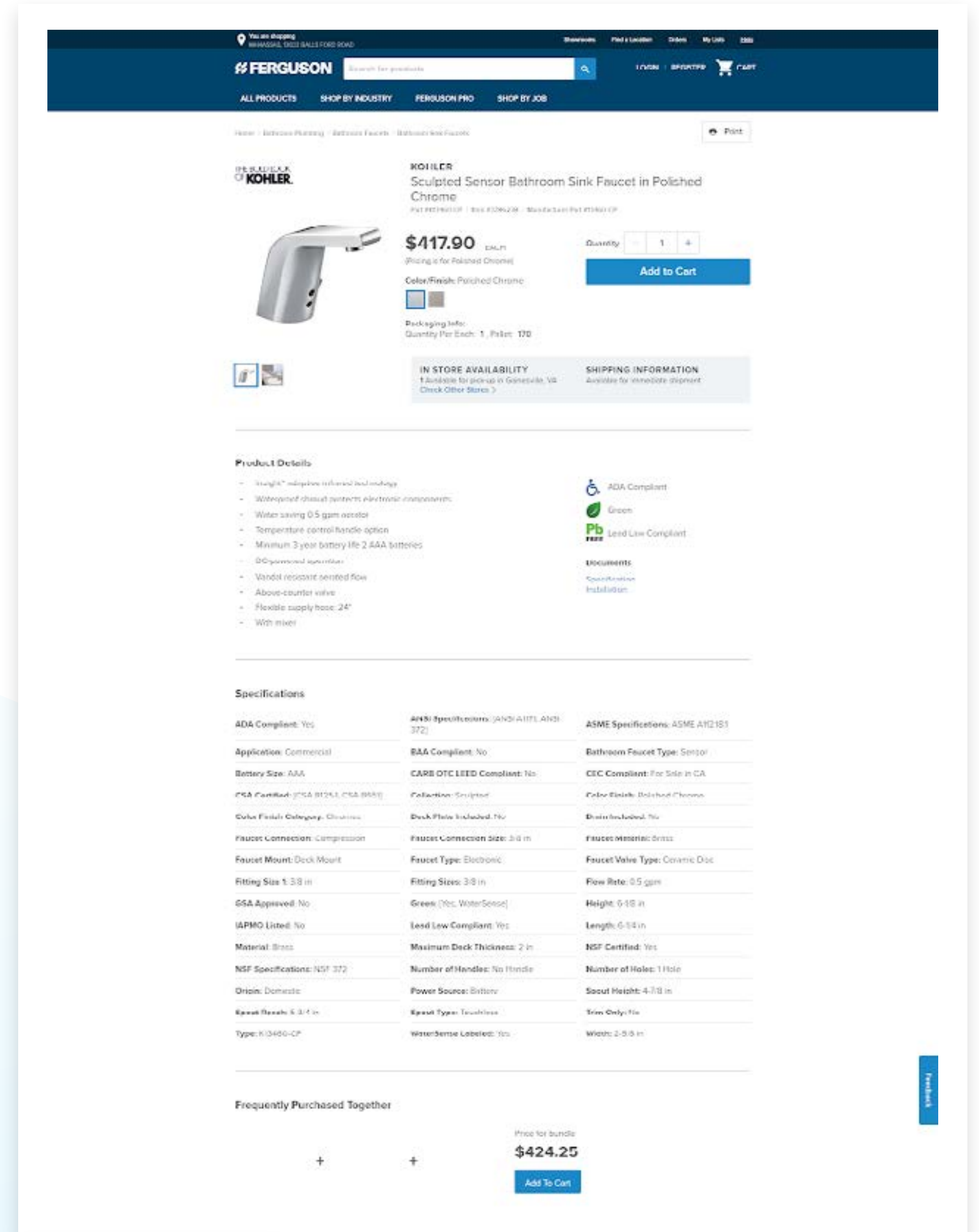
# WHAT IS A **PRODUCT DESCRIPTION?**

Simply put, a product description is the text content connected with each product you sell. Your product descriptions appear on your product detail page (PDP). See an example here for a Kohler faucet PDP from a B2B distributor’s ecommerce site.

The product description here shows highly specific product details (e.g. “Insight™ adaptive infrared technology”), product features (e.g. ADA compliant), and technical specifications (e.g. ANSI Specifications: [ANSI A117.1, ANSI 372]).

Product descriptions are one crucial aspect of a top-performing product page, **working in tandem with enhanced content features** like images, videos, graphics, comparison charts, 360-degree image spins, and PDF downloads to engage customers.

Product descriptions are also the core of a **strong ecommerce search optimization strategy**, which helps manufacturers rank higher in the search results of their distributor/retailer partner sites. This is done by incorporating relevant keywords into the copy of titles, meta descriptions, and product descriptions. In the example of the Kohler faucet, these search engine keywords may include “sensor bathroom sink faucet,” and “polished chrome faucet.”



Source: Ferguson



# HOW TO CREATE **TOP-PERFORMING** **PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS**

Follow these best practices to create impactful, customer-centric product descriptions that help your customers research, compare, and purchase products.

## 1. Write for **Your Customers**

As you read earlier, your B2B buyer is looking for different information than a B2C shopper. For your buyers, you need to focus on the types of information that helps them make purchase decisions and do their job quickly and easily.

Since you know your customers and your products best, you can ask yourself: what do my customers usually ask about this product? What are they comparing it to? What are the benefits that are important to them? What technical information do I need to provide to help them make that decision?

### To start answering those questions, look for at your in-house knowledge sources:

- Your inside sales team: how do they sell your products? What information do they highlight to sell the product? What anecdotes or data points do they use to educate and engage your customers?
- Your customer service/live chat team: what questions are they asked frequently about your products? What stops customers from buying a product directly online? What more information could be added to your product detail page that would answer these questions?
- Search analytics: what keywords are visitors searching? What are the words and terms that site visitors use to describe the products they want?
- Your customer ratings and reviews. What words and terms do they use to describe your products? How can you incorporate this human learning into your product descriptions.
- For an example for how reviews can inform your product descriptions, please see this example from [Honeywell's Heat Only Non-Programmable Thermostat](#).

#### Simple Heat Control

Complete with mounting hardware and a wall plate, this Heat Only Non Programmable Thermostat is built with low voltage controls with a snap-action switch for heating systems. This Honeywell Home manual thermostat from Resideo makes heat control in your home a breeze. No leveling required.

*This is the brand's product description. The text is straightforward, technical, and clever ("makes heat control a breeze").*

The screenshot shows a customer review from a user named 'Jzzj' from Los Angeles. The review is dated 12 days ago and has a 5-star rating. The title of the review is 'Simple on off works well'. The text of the review reads: 'Manual set temp turn on n off w slider. Simple way to turn gravity heater on n off n set temperature on gauge. Accurate n easy.' Below the review text, there is a 'Yes, I recommend this product.' checkbox which is checked. To the right of the review, there are two progress bars: 'Quality' and 'Value', both showing a full bar of five segments.

*And this is a very positive review left on the site. The text isn't error-free, but clearly explains why the customer likes it - because it is "accurate and easy."*

### How to get started

Tackle this by starting with your most important products, however you define them. These may be your top sellers, your highest margin, your signature products. Then work your way through your mid-range and long-tail products.

## 2. **Define the Structure** of Your Product Descriptions

Now that you have the strategic approach for your product descriptions, how is it going to be presented on your product detail page? How are you going to turn all of this important information into consumable pieces of information? Where are you going to use images, illustrations, or videos to help tell your product story?

Breaking your content into short sections, using consistent headlines, and bullet points help your customers “understand” your site. This lets them quickly navigate, research, compare, and shop. Which helps them complete their job more efficiently.

**In general, most manufacturer’s product descriptions include the following sections of information, in this order:**

- Short description: 1-2 sentences describing the product using specific terms and SEO keywords
- Product details: bullet points that are a mix of features and benefits that help your customers quickly understand the product, starting with the most important or distinctive details
- Technical specifications: bullet points that provide detailed technical specifications for highly knowledgeable or specialized buyers ([see Fastenal’s product attributes here](#))

### **How to get started**

Based on your understanding of your products and your customers, what are they key sections of information, and what are the terms you want to use to label each section? How will this information be presented visually?

### 3. Articulate Key Features and Benefits

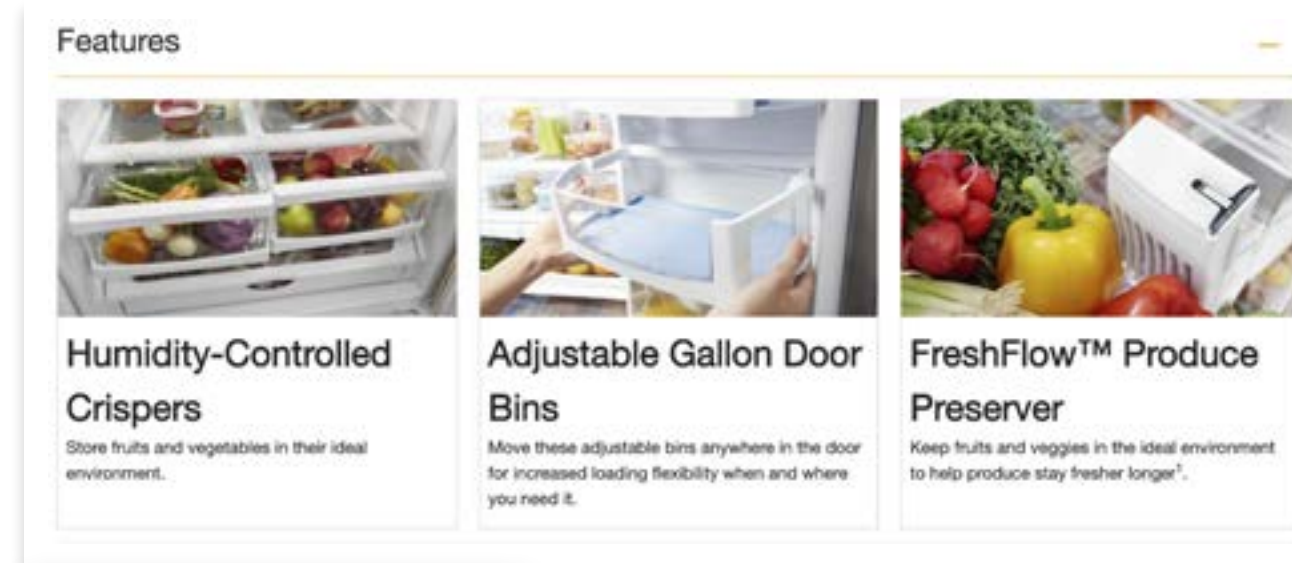
Armed with the knowledge of your customers and the structure of your product descriptions, you can start getting to the nuts and bolts of product descriptions. Your product description copy must answer the primary questions and concerns of your customers. These are often broken down into two categories: features and benefits.

#### What are the differences between product features and benefits?

- **A feature explains what your product is.** This can include dimensions, materials, specifications, and other technical details.
- **A benefit explains what your product does.** This can include elements specific to the product and valuable to the customer.

Often features and benefits are combined in the product description copy. For example:

- **Whirlpool Refrigerator:** *Humidity-Controlled Crispers [feature]. Store fruits and vegetables in their ideal environment [benefit].*



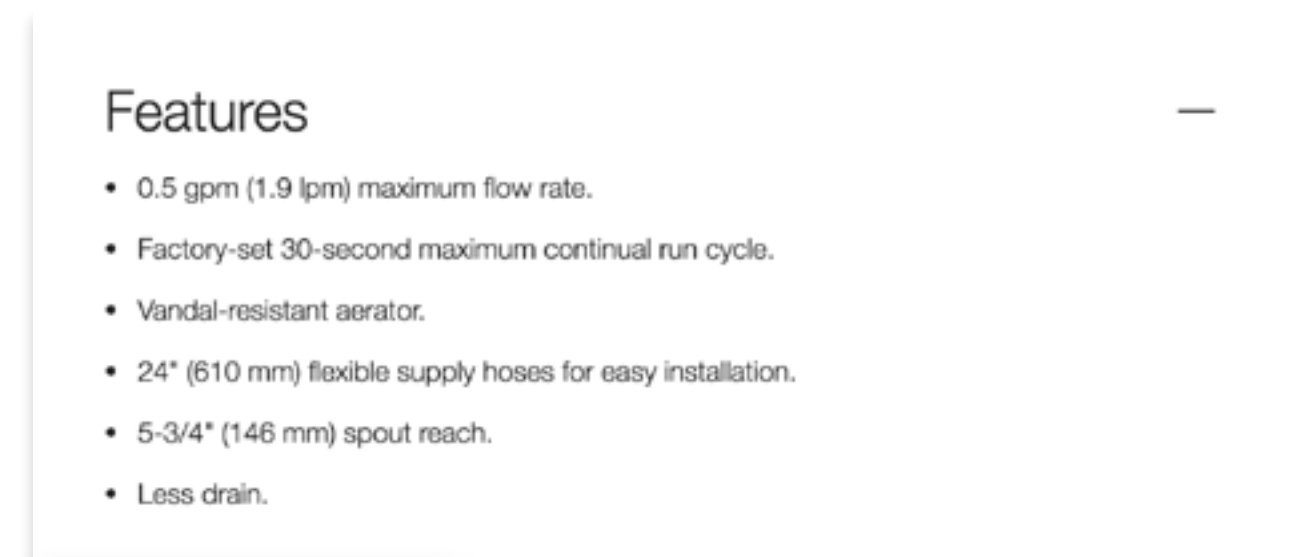
Source: Whirlpool

- **John Deere's Riding Lawnmower:** *Hydrostatic/automatic drive transmission [feature] gives an infinite choice of ground speeds [benefit].*



Source: John Deere

- **Kohler's faucet:** *24" (610 mm) flexible supply hoses [feature] for easy installation [benefit].*



Source: Kohler

#### How to get started

As you write your product descriptions, check that your copy includes both features and benefits. As you saw above, these don't need to be separate sentences or bullet points. See where a combination of the two can strengthen your product descriptions.



## 4. Use **Precise and Concise Language**

Your customers are most likely experienced buyers, researching, comparing, and purchasing for work. Your goal is to help them get their job done quickly and easily. Using clear, precise, and concise language helps them do just that.

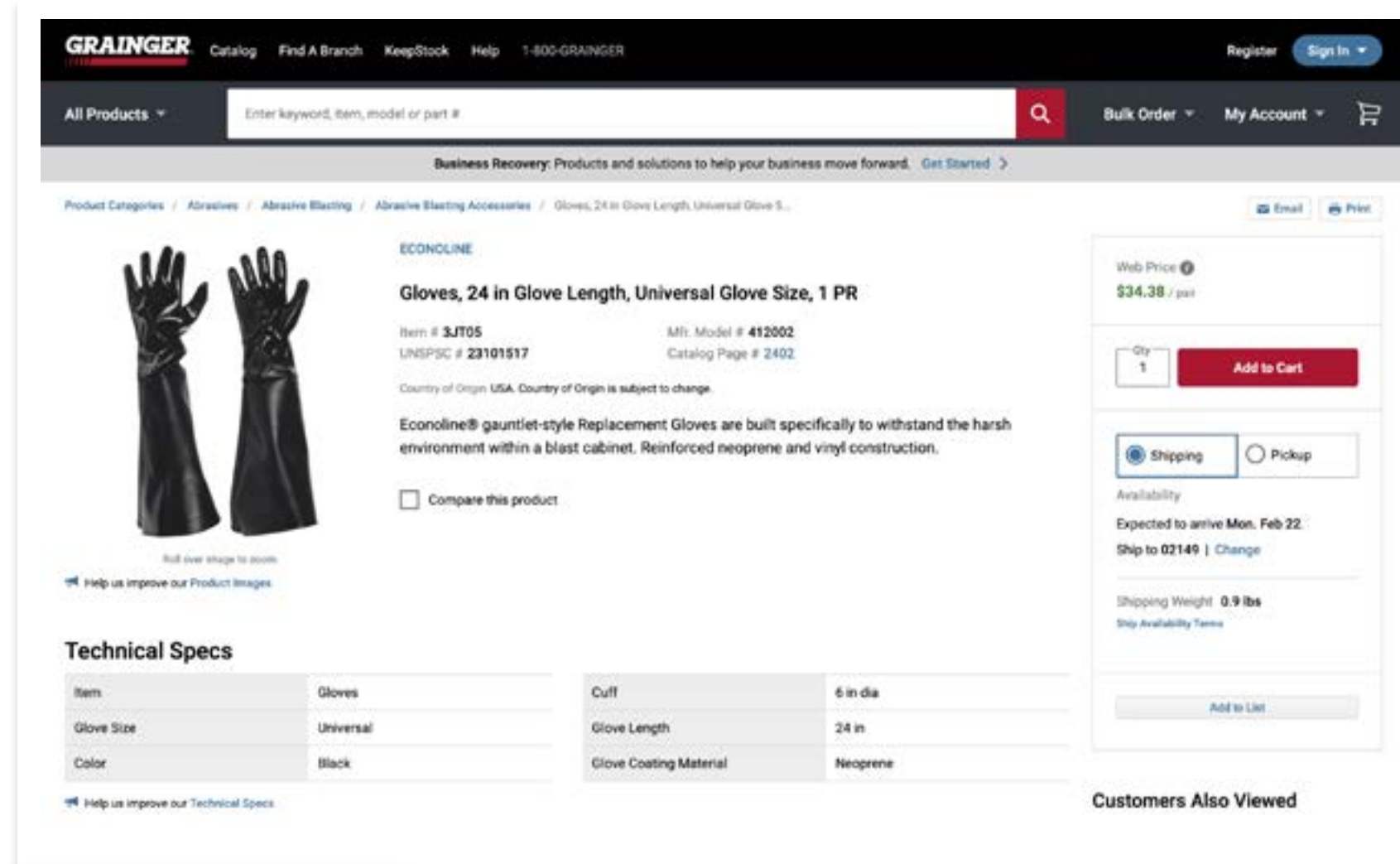
When writing your product descriptions, get to the essential details quickly. Avoid lengthy sentences and industry jargon, and review your copy for grammar and punctuation before publishing. In addition to your own brand guidelines, consider the following style guide for your copy.

### Product Description Copy Style Guide

- Write in the third person
- Spell out numbers under 10
- Use consistent punctuation
- Use Oxford commas
- Capitalize all major words in titles
- Use bullet points to break up text and highlight important information
- Avoid using all capital letters unless it's part of a product or brand name
- Avoid using excessive exclamation marks

### How to get started

Write and review your copy for clarity and simplicity. Replace extra words and remove jargon. Compare with competitors to see how you can differentiate your products with clearer copy. See an example of highly technical, specific, and compelling copy on [Grainger for Econoline gloves](#).



Source: *Grainger*

## 5. Engage With **Storytelling**

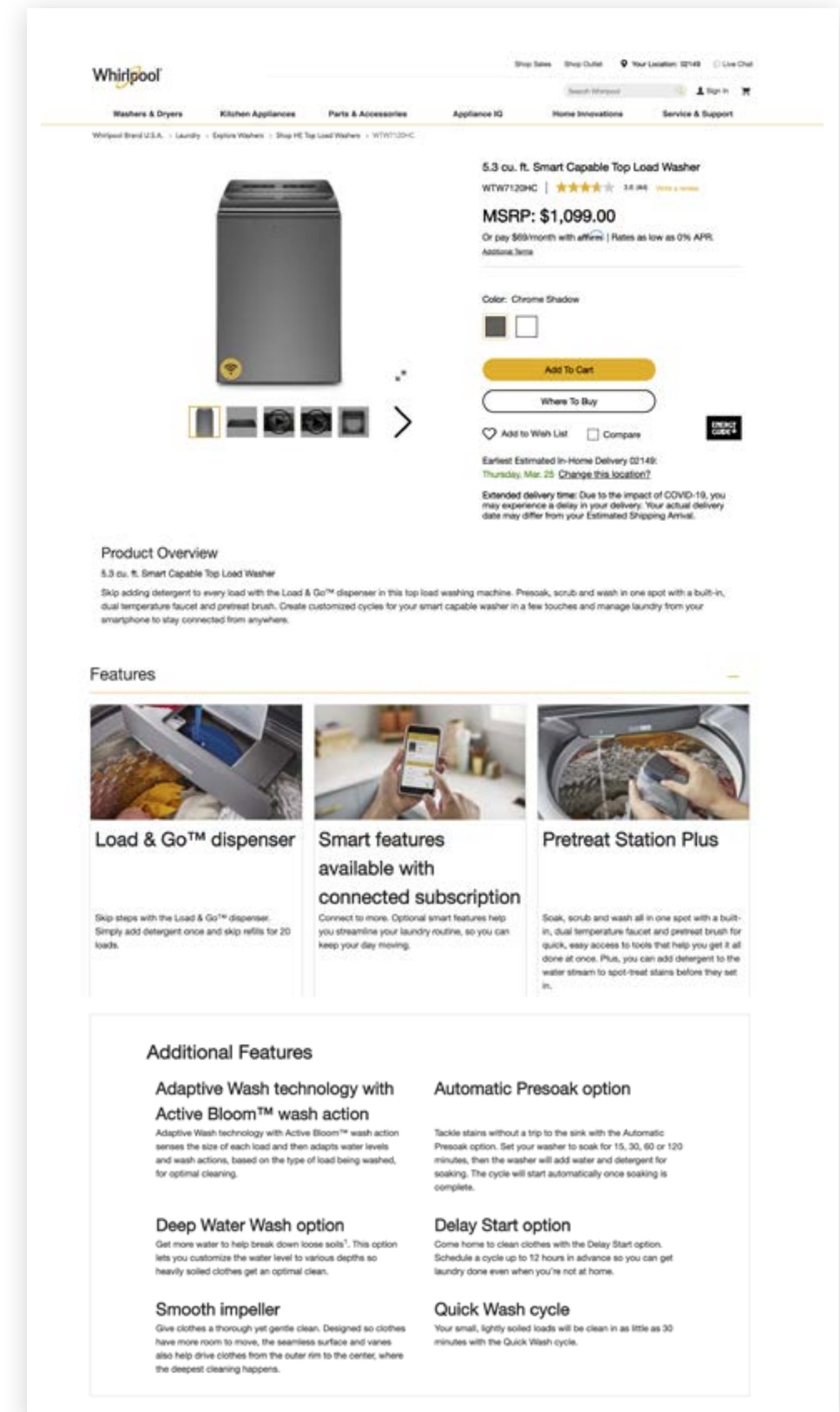
Your product description is an opportunity to tell and reinforce your brand story. The product detail page may be their first interaction with your brand. Like picking up a new product on a shelf, the graphics and texts on the page tells the story of your brand.

How can you weave storytelling in your product description? This is where your research into your reviews and your team's insights can shine. How can you reflect your customers' challenges and needs in your copy?

How can you echo your brand mission and your audience? If your goal is helping your B2B customers do their job easily, how can you show that this product page is a seamless part of your overall brand experience?

### How to get started

Define how you want to tackle storytelling in your product descriptions. With the understanding that your primary goal is to make your product pages easy to navigate, research, and purchase, what are the storytelling and brand elements that you can add to reinforce your brand? Look to your brand guidelines for direction on tone, manner, and terms to reinforce your brand experience.



Source: Whirlpool



## 6. **Ensure Content Consistency** Across Online Channels

While there used to be just one or two places where your customers could research and purchase your products (from a local store, distributor, or rep), your customers are now researching and purchasing across multiple touchpoints. They now have a wide range of buying options — from voice-activated buying to mobile apps.

This is a great opportunity for manufacturers, but opens new complications. Studies have found that brands with **differing content between each of these touchpoints** risk losing brand trust, as inconsistent product data between sites makes 27% of shoppers abandon a sale, according to our 2020 Consumer Research Report.

For example, if your brand highlights a product feature on your Grainger PDP, but it's missing from your Fastenal PDP, customers can leave concerned or confused. Closing these gaps helps your customers research, compare, and purchase more easily — growing your brand loyalty and your sales.

To help this, a syndication solution **ensures content consistency across online channels** by allowing you to maintain multiple versions of product content in parallel and at scale. Syndication streamlines the content-management process, giving your team the agility and speed needed to keep up with these expanding markets.

## 7. Avoid **Common Content Issues** to Safeguard Publication

Several content issues could cause a partner to reject a PDP submission, but many of them relate to unverifiable claims. These could include calling a product “best-selling,” or “environmentally friendly,” without including the source for these claims. In other cases, content can be flagged for time-sensitive copy, trademarks, or mentioning other distributors and competitors.

### **Here are some of the most common content issues that can lead to rejection:**

- Boastful language
- Unverifiable claims
- Health claims
- Competitor comparison
- References to distributors
- Time-sensitive words
- Shipping, pricing, and contact information
- Warranty information

When writing product descriptions, reference the distributor guidelines to ensure your copy will be approved. A Commerce Experience Management (CommerceXM) platform like Salsify **highlights rejection issues within its product page report**, helping brands avoid trial-and-error publication.

# MEETING MODERN CUSTOMER DEMANDS

Creating top-performing B2B product descriptions requires thoughtfulness and diligence. Taking these steps can help you best serve your B2B customers with clear, specific, and consistent information across all touchpoints. By supporting their researching, comparing, and ultimately purchasing, you drive digital shelf success: deepening your brand engagement and driving online conversions.

## About Salsify

Salsify provides purpose-built digital shelf management for B2B manufacturers, empowering them with an integrated platform that delivers engaging product experiences across every channel, distributor, and end customer.

[See How it Works](#)