

## Introduction

This research is conducted for an Amazon seller who specializes in seasonal and occasion decorations and accessories. The company intends to revise their core brand identity and messaging and have therefore asked for a comprehensive review of their category, competitors and opportunities. The research uses only secondary sources — those easily found and publicly available — and some assumptions as to consumer preferences and buying habits.

## About Sewanta

Sewanta sells products for Christmas, Halloween, Easter, and general celebrations. They have summer, winter, spring, and fall categories. They sell pool equipment and accessories, summer and winter bird feeders, Christmas lights and clips to hold/hang the lights, snow spreaders, canning jars, and more. They pick their products based on what is selling well, but they need help clarifying for their audience what their catalog is and what the story is behind all the items. They imagined a brand story like “This is John. He needed to hang his lights and filter his pool,” but we’re worried that’s not going to work the way they want it to. They’re looking to expand to all decorations. Their motivation to join this business was opportunity and lack of options (for example, when looking for light clips, there were only a few types, and they wanted to see more on the market). They don’t have much in the way of differentiation, but they always focus on strong info and good listings — clarity and quality.

## Sewanta Product Range

FALL	HALLOWEEN	CHRISTMAS	WINTER	EASTER	FESTIVAL	SPRING	SUMMER
Air Pillows Pool Cover	Scary Decorations	Light Clips	Suet Feeder	Eggs With Yellow Eggs Holder	Party Lights	Hummingbird Feeders	Bird Seed Trays
Pool Covers	Halloween Inflatables	Light Stakes	Seed Feeder	Eggs Filled With Mini Vehicles	Curtain Lights		Bird Water Bath
Leaf Bags		Christmas Lights	Salt/Seed Hand Spreaders		Rope Light		Pool Filter Cartridges

		Suction Light Clips	Spa Filters		Artificial Plants & Greenery		Inflatable Tubes
		Candle/ Candle Clamps	Finch Feeder				Pool Accessories
		Stocking Hangers					Pool Test Strips
		Wreath Hangers					Garden Spray Nozzles
		Inflatable Stakes					Garden Hoses
		Floodlight					Garden Tools
		Cord Connector					Plant Grow Bags
		Cord Wind Up					Canning Jars
		Ginger Bread Cookies					Magnetic Screen Door
		Decor Snow Blankets					Tent Sand Weight Bag
		Snow Flakes					Patio Furniture Set Covers
		Snow Spray					Tarps
		Electric Candles					
		Christmas Toys					

		Ornaments					
		Tabletop Mini Tree					
		Garland					
		Lighted Gift Box					
		Lighted Reindeer Bucks					
		Christmas Stockings					
		Car Reindeer					

## Buyer Personas and Category Pain Points

A buyer person is an excellent way of understanding the motivations and buying habits of your target market, however, with so many different products (each with a unique target market with unique pain points and motivations) it is unhelpful to list one for each. Instead we've listed Sewanta's core categories with some of the most common pain points per category, and we've added a section which compares Amazon buyers with direct buyers.

CATEGORY	PAIN POINTS
Christmas and Holiday Decorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Want to spread joy and cheer this year but don;t want the lights and decorations to be too cumbersome to put up. That means easy to store, easy to untangle, easy to operate.</li> <li>- Wants the lights (in particular) to be safe</li> <li>- Wants the lights to seamlessly integrate with existing decor and style.</li> <li>- Wants products that are different from the neighbors</li> </ul>

Pool Covers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wants an easy to use pool cover to keep kids and animals safe</li> <li>- Wants a cost effective way to keep the pool warm in winter</li> <li>- Needs to know how the dimensions work, how to measure and that it will fit.</li> <li>- Wants assurances that accessories like rollers will work with it</li> </ul>
Jars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Needs a jar that can stand up to heat, be easily stacked, looks nice on the shelf / pantry and suit labels</li> <li>- Often collects the jar but fails to use them, so needs a guide and some motivation</li> <li>- Needs them to be safe and reusable</li> <li>- Gets asked about pickling and preserving so bundles to give to newbies would be helpful</li> </ul>
Garden Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Likes having equipment from the same brand (a matching set)</li> <li>- Needs guidance about when to use each product</li> <li>- Doesn't like unnecessary packaging and waste</li> <li>- Wants easy assembly</li> </ul>

### Amazon Persona (i.e. someone that shops directly from Amazon)

<b>Name:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amazon Andy</li> </ul>	<b>Demographic Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Male</li> <li>- \$95k + salary</li> <li>- College education</li> <li>- Owns home</li> <li>- 3 children and a dog</li> </ul>	<b>Objections to Buying Direct:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understands that product quality can vary on Amazon so reads multiple reviews and compares multiple alternatives.</li> <li>- Doesn't like buying direct because of slow shipping and trust issues.</li> <li>- It's another login, another account and another company with his credit card details.</li> </ul>
<b>Pain Points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doesn't like shopping in store, doesn't like being accosted by staff</li> <li>- Time-poor. Works hard and spends all spare time with the kids.</li> </ul>	<b>Motivations For Using Amazon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convenience (long time Amazon Prime user)</li> <li>- Shipping reliability</li> <li>- User trust and consumer reviews</li> </ul>	

<b>Name:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct Danielle</li> </ul>	<b>Demographic Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Female</li> <li>- Part time worker / full time Mom</li> <li>- College educated</li> <li>- Three kids, dog and cat</li> </ul>	<b>Objections to Using Amazon:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finds the navigation overwhelming and prefers simplicity.</li> <li>- Lies to be made to feel special with offers, discounts and personalised emails.</li> </ul>
<b>Pain Points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overspending. Can get a little over zealous around holidays and occasions.</li> <li>- Favours small business, small teams and building relationships</li> </ul>	<b>Motivations For Buying Direct</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deals and promotions</li> <li>- Loyalty offers</li> <li>- Easier to navigate product offerings</li> <li>- Likes to follow the company's social media efforts</li> </ul>	

## Competitor Analysis

The following analysis is based on both Amazon and direct eCommerce sellers; companies that are selling similar products to Sewanta. We'll look at how they categorise their products, how they market them and differentiation offered.

COMPETITOR	WEBSITE / AMAZON STORE	CATEGORY	DETAILS AND THINGS TO LEARN
Ollny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a></li> <li>- Amazon Store</li> <li>- <a href="https://www.ollny.com">https://www.ollny.com</a></li> </ul>	Christmas Lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heavy Amazon advertising presence</li> <li>- Strong standalone website with eCommerce functionality</li> <li>- Immediate lead capture through email newsletter subscription (along with first purchase discount).</li> <li>- Excellent range of products including indoor, outdoor and solar</li> <li>- 1 year guarantee</li> <li>- 30 day returns</li> <li>- An inspiration section on their website to illustrate how their products can be used (encouraging</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>upsell etc.)</li> <li>- 4.6 / 5 rating with 98% positive in the last 12 months (1293 ratings)</li> </ul>
Woohaha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a> (example)</li> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Store</a> (example)</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	Christmas Lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No standalone website, bit they sell through retail distributors like Walmart and Amazon sellers like <a href="#">Pellimo</a>.</li> <li>- Enormous range at Amazon's best prices</li> <li>- 100% money back guarantee for whatever reason ("if you're not delighted")</li> <li>- Water proof, energy saving and eight different modes on all their Christmas lights</li> <li>- Pellimo has a 4.5 / 5 rating on Amazon</li> </ul>
eLightBulb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Store</a></li> <li>- Website</li> </ul>	Christmas Lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese manufacturer with a hugely successful Amazon store.</li> <li>- Sells Christmas lights, heaters and batteries.</li> <li>- No website</li> <li>- Excellent variety of bulb shapes and sizes (not just fairy lights. <a href="#">Example</a>)</li> <li>- Categorise by occasions wedding, christmas and birthday</li> <li>- Many of their products are dimmable</li> <li>- They do an excellent job of showcasing customers using the lights. For example at weddings, bars and birthdays. This conveys emotion and reliability.</li> <li>- 4.4 rating with 97% positive in the last 12 months (6622 ratings).</li> </ul>
Goods for Your Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a></li> <li>-</li> </ul>	Jars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specialise in just two brands across about three categories kitchen, cleaners, jars)</li> <li>- Don't offer enough sizes or do enough to upsell other canning / jar products.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have the Amazon's Choice seal of approval</li> <li>- 4.6/ 5 rating with 100% positive in the last 12 months (512 ratings)</li> </ul>
Spanla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Store</a></li> </ul>	Jars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No website, but distribution with Walmart and other retailers.</li> <li>- Plenty of jar options, sizes, fly covers and accessories</li> <li>- Amazon's Choice seal of approval</li> <li>- Interestingly they tie the jars to party / wedding favors making the most of the occasion market (not just the pickling market)</li> <li>- Should support that category with more ideas and inspiration to encourage upsell</li> <li>- 4.5/5 rating with 97% positive in the last 12 months (458 ratings)</li> </ul>
Note, see Mason Jar Lifestyle too (below)			
Nature Anywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Store</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Website</a></li> </ul>	Bird Feeders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specialise in a Window Bird House and Hummingbird feeders. Different design to Sewanta but clearly popular with 6k Houses sold.</li> <li>- Lifetime guarantee</li> <li>- Same day shipping</li> <li>- Excellent videos to show the product in action and a helpful <a href="#">Bird Feeding Guide</a></li> <li>- Only 6 product in their online store (5 feeders and wind chimes)</li> </ul>
Colima (Sand Mine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Store</a></li> </ul>	Bird Feeders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer reviews aren;t particularly strong for this seller, but they're selling plenty of feeders.</li> <li>- Different design to other feeders, which could explain the popularity. Although, it's bronze and</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plastic.</li> <li>- Like Sewanta, they sell lots of decorations. At the moment they're promoting Thanksgiving and Christmas.</li> <li>- 4.3 / 5</li> </ul>
Gray Bunny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Listing</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Amazon Store</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Website</a></li> </ul>	Bird Feeders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shocking website. One that wouldn't give their visitors any confidence when buying online.</li> <li>- 90-day money back guarantee</li> <li>- Probably the most direct competitor on this list (given the range they're trying to build)</li> <li>- With 97% positive in the last 12 months (2771 ratings)</li> <li>- The biggest range of feeders on Amazon and a huge range of other goods (hooks, hanging baskets, law aerators)</li> </ul>
<p>Note, Amazon also sell the hugely popular <a href="#">First Nature</a> and Natures Way ranges.</p>			

## Category Analysis and Market Opportunities

In this section we look at what's selling well on Amazon at the moment, why we think they're selling well and whether there are opportunities for Sewanta to be represented in the same categories. Naturally, we've chosen products with an alignment with the existing Sewanta range. All of the products below feature on the Amazon best sellers list.

CATEGORY	TOP PRODUCTS	TOP SELLERS	WHY IT'S WORKING
Patio, Lawn and Garden	Room Thermometers	<No Standouts>	

	Grill Pellets Indoor Potting Mix Snow Melters Plant Food Spikes Insect Bait and Sprays Pool Cleaning Sponges Pool Nets		
Home and Kitchen	Artificial Ivy Leaves Artificial Tulips Candles Cans and Jars Drinking Mason Jars	Mason Jar Lifestyle	<a href="#">Mason Jar Lifestyle</a> does a great job inspiring buyers with their quirky and stylish ideas for using Mason Jars. The founders also have strong personal brands and advocate for an eco-friendly lifestyle — which resonates well.
Pet Supplies	Dog Bags Dog Beds Litter Box Refills Chew Toys Fun Feeders Pet Crates	<a href="#">iCrate by MidWest Homes</a> Outward Hound	<p>Outward Hound has an excellent standalone <a href="#">website</a> and is a sensible yardstick to use when building out a Sewanta presence.</p> <p>Not only do they have strong brand equity in their products, they also have a number of strong subbrands illustrating the need for individual brands (e.g. Outward Hound®, Best Friends by Sheri®, Planet Dog®, Petstages®, Charming Pet®, Wholesome Pride Pet Treats®, and Nina Ottosson®)</p> <p>They're supporting product content (images, videos and descriptions) is incredibly detailed and they have large numbers of reviews (perhaps they incentivise these — which Sewanta should too especially their decoration range)</p>

## Category Opportunities

The following are all opportunities that are already closely aligned to the products Sewanta already sells. All of the categories listed should be considered by Sewanta when listing their products.

PRODUCT(S)	BROAD CATEGORIES	NARROW CATEGORIES	ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
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<p>Air Pillows Pool Cover Pool Covers Pool Cleaners Pool and Spa Filters Pool and Spa Test Strips</p>	<p>Outdoors Patio, Lawn and Garden Pools, Hot Tubs and Spas</p>	<p>Pool Covers Pool Products Pool Accessories Tarps and Tie Downs Pool Safety Covers Pool Winter Covers Pool Cleaners</p>	<p>Pool Inflatables</p>
<p>Christmas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decorations and Ornaments</li> <li>- Stockings and Hangers</li> <li>- Lights</li> <li>- Light Clips</li> <li>- Wreaths</li> <li>- Wreath Clips</li> <li>- Cookie Cutters</li> <li>- Christmas Trees</li> <li>- Toys</li> <li>- Snow Spray</li> </ul> <p>Halloween</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decorations and Ornaments</li> <li>- Candles</li> <li>- Inflatables</li> <li>- Cookie Cutters</li> <li>- Toys</li> </ul> <p>Easter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eggs Filled With Mini Vehicles</li> <li>- Eggs With Yellow Eggs Holder</li> </ul>	<p>Seasonal Lighting Decorative Hanging Ornaments Outdoor Lighted Holiday Displays Christmas Ball Ornaments</p>	<p>Indoor String Lighting Party Supplies LED Strip Lights Inflatable Outdoor Holiday Yard Decorations Wreaths</p>	<p>Superbowl St. Patrick's Day Valentines Day Independence Day (4th of July) Baby Showers Sweet 16, 21st and Other Birthdays Graduation Thanksgiving</p> <p>Sweets</p> <p>Costumes</p> <p>Recipe Books</p> <p>Serverware</p>
<p>Artificial House Plants</p>	<p>Artificial Flowers Artificial Plants and Greeners Artificial Trees (Fake Plants)</p>		<p>Real House Plants House Plant Fertilizer House Plant Pots, Hanging Pots House Plant Dust Cloths</p>
<p>Bird Feeders Hand Spreaders Bird Baths Bird Seed Trays</p>	<p>Garden and Outdoor Pet Supplies</p>	<p>Bird Feeder Backyard Birding Supplies Bird Feeding and Watering Supplies</p>	

Outdoor Lights - Fairy Lights - String Lighting	Patio, Lawn and Garden	Outdoor String Lighting LED Strip Lights Outdoor Lighting Products	Festoon Lights
Garden Equipment - Hoses - Tools - Spray Nozzles - Grow Bags - Leaf Bags	Garden Equipment Garden Supplies Pation, Lawn and Garden		Seed Pots
Canning Jars	Home and Kitchen		Canning Supplies Canning Guides, Books, Recipes Canning Starter Bundles

## Additional Questions and Research

### 1. Should Sewanta have a standalone website

Yep, 1,000%. It's important to offer multi-channel eCommerce shopping experiences to ensure the business isn't entirely reliant on Amazon for sales (and therefore reducing the risk of lost revenue from Amazon search results changes, terms and conditions changes or account suspension) and to meet the demand from consumers who prefer to shop direct. A standalone eCommerce store is also likely to deliver higher margins without selling, storage and distribution fees.

But a standalone eCommerce store will add costs to the business. For example, the website design and development costs, hosting costs, storage and distribution space, shipping fees and of course, marketing costs. The marketing costs will be significant and there is likely to be an initial struggle to generate traffic as the site gets ranked and builds momentum. But the long term benefits will far outweigh the up-front costs.

Long term benefits include, storing more information about the customers and up-selling and cross-selling more to them. For example, on Amazon it can be difficult to make it obvious the other products the customer can buy from Sewanta, with a dedicated website, Sewanta can serve more personalized recommendations and even use email campaigns and remarketing ads to sell more to each customer.

There are some tricks that could get some of the existing Amazon customers to transition to the website. For example, including a discount voucher for 15% off a customer's first web order in the Amazon shipped goods etc.

## **2. What value would there be to having a character/mascot for products on Amazon?**

None. In our view a mascot isn't required for products on Amazon or a dedicated brand with its own web presence and website. Mascots can be effective when the category lends itself to one (e.g. children's products, sporting goods and health foods), but the Sewanta range is simply too diverse to be able to find a suitable mascot that accurately represents all products and appeals to each target market.

Adults rarely relate to mascots and one of the core product ranges (e.g. holiday recommendations) are

## **3. Any additional tips or perspectives on standing out as an Amazon seller are appreciated**

One thing to consider throughout the Sewanta journey will be the use of sub-brands. We understand the desire to be a one stop shop, but one stop shops are generally large scale department stores (like Walmart) and not individual niche Amazon sellers. And while it makes complete sense to be the home of decorations for all holidays and seasons, it makes less sense to be the one stop shop for jars, bird feeders and Christmas lights.

Sewanta should consider having multiple brands. E.g.

- Sewanta Holiday Decorations and Accessories: Celebrate your family's important holidays and events with the lights, decor, props and more.
- BirdBuddy: Attract and spoil the best of nature with feeders, baths and houses.

or

- Sewanta Indoor: Decorations, kitchen supplies and glassware that transforms your home
- Sewanta Outdoor: Bird feeders, pool covers and garden supplies to make your outdoors magical

## **4. Do people shop by seasons?**

For fashion, yes, for every other category no. Generally, the most applicable search terms and categories will be the product name or function not the season in which they are used. Therefore, for most of Sewanta's products, we don't recommend grouping by season. E.g. stick with Pool Accessories, Pool Equipment, Pool Covers, Pool Toys, Pool Inflatables without mention of Summer etc.

Of course holidays should be grouped by the specific holidays, but our other categories should focus on the departments or use that customers would be searching for and would easily be able to navigate. Instead, seasons can become themes in Sewanta's email content, social media content and promotions. E.g. Our Fall Favourites.