



# Shades of Light Builds Topical Authority, Drives Revenue with SEO

## The Business Challenge

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Since its start in 1986 from a single store, Shades of Light's business designing and retailing high-end lighting products with distinguished style has grown to encompass multi-channel, national sales of its signature lights along with an expanded offering of home décor products. Shades of Light's website is an important part of the company's ability to reach customers outside of its Virginia-based brick-and-mortar retail locations.

Working with Merkle Inc., Shades of Light's SEO, SEM and performance marketing partner, the company conducted keyword gap analysis as part of their annual SEO campaign planning. The analysis revealed a significant ranking gap on mid- to high-volume informational topics, especially those that rank for "how to" and "ideas" questions. To fill these gaps, foster awareness on top-of-funnel searches, and improve the expertise, authority, and trust on the lighting and home décor categories most important to the business, the SEO team proposed a content calendar oriented around long-form blogs.

## The BrightEdge Solution

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Shades of Light took a targeted, systematic approach to content planning, production and implementation to maximize the impact of each new piece of content. "We knew from our analysis of key business category search volume that there was substantial search demand for the types of products Shades of Light offers, but there was little to showcase the business's expertise in styling, designing, and curating these product sets" said Anna Taylor, SEO associate manager for Merkle Inc. "The valuable insights were there, we just needed the right pages, with content structured the right way to capture those search users."

**The content-building approach was comprised of three parts and supported in each stage by the BrightEdge platform:**

- 1. Keyword Gap & Competitive Landscape Analysis**
- 2. Blog Post Outlining & Writing**
- 3. Implementation Tracking**

## Keyword Gap & Competitive Landscape Analysis

For each of the major categories on site, Merkle produced a keyword gap analysis that identified competitive opportunities, prioritized by search volume and competition level.

**BrightEdge Capabilities Used:** Data Cube for Keyword Discovery & Competitive Ranking Research; BrightEdge Instant for Bulk Search Volume Analysis

## Blog Post Outlining & Writing

For each topic identified, Merkle produced an SEO keyword-targeted wireframe for new blog pages, including quick answer-optimized headings; search engine / user-friendly formats such as structured lists, tables, and formulas; strategic internal links; and structured data opportunities. Shades of Light's team used their industry expertise to write the outlined articles.

**BrightEdge Capabilities Used:** Data Cube Quick Answer Filtering, Visual SERP Reporting on Shades of Light Tracked Keywords

## Implementation Tracking

BrightEdge insights helped the SEO team supplement its traffic and revenue tracking with keyword and quick answer profile growth charts. BrightEdge also helped them identify keyword visibility in new SERP features, like Google Quick Answers and mobile Interesting Finds, that they would not have otherwise identified.

**BrightEdge Capabilities Used:** Data Cube Quick Answer Profile Insights, Visual SERP Reporting on Shades of Light Tracked Keywords

## The Results

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Over the course of the SEO campaign, Shades of Light and Merkle produced and published 11 long-form blog posts, a 550% increase from the previous year's total of two posts. The results were significant, impacting a host of key metrics from organic traffic to revenue.

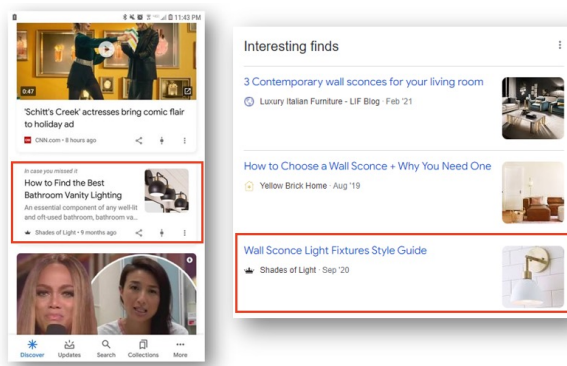
Of the effort, Shades of Light Digital Marketing Manager Michael Kurze noted, "the success of this collaborative program made it clear to us that long-form content should remain a tentpole project in our SEO program. Merkle's approach was based on detailed research and a structured approach, which made it easy for writers on our team to learn how to build strong content for SEO from the ground up."

"Because we could define the SEO opportunity for Shades of Light so clearly, then recommend content in such a targeted and evergreen way," Taylor said, "We were able to earn major wins with a relatively modest volume of content."

## Breaking into Google Discover & Interesting Finds Mobile SERP Features

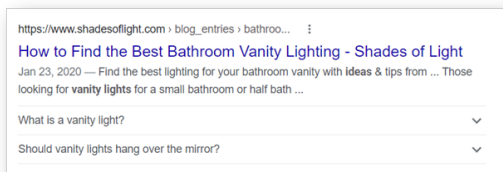
For the first time, Shades of Light content appeared consistently in pre-search Google Discover and mobile Interesting Finds on high-volume product category queries.

*New 2020 Blog Posts in Google Discover (Left); Interesting Finds (Right)*

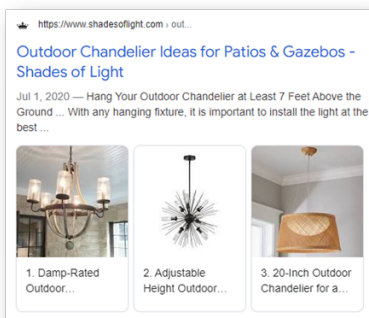


## Rich Results from Schema Implementations

Marking up blog posts with Schema allowed Shades of Light to appear with versatile and engaging rich results.



*FAQ Schema Rich Result on "vanity lights"*



*HowTo Schema Rich Result on "how to hang an outdoor chandelier"*

### Final Thoughts

Going forward, long-form content production will remain a fixture on Shades of Light's yearly SEO roadmap. Matching BrightEdge's content insights, Merkle's knowledge of the best way to structure content for search, and Shades of Light's expertise in lighting and design topics continues to yield results in the form of increased presence in the search engine results pages for relevant, popular keywords.

## Unprecedented Blog Traffic & Revenue Growth

↑ **183%**  
Organic sessions to the blog **grew +183% year-over-year** (Y/Y).

↑ **1,071%**  
Organic revenue from users who entered through the blog **grew +1,071% Y/Y**.

↑ **321%**  
The blog keyword profile **grew +321% (+4.3k keywords)** between Jan – Dec 2020

↑ **666%**  
The blog quick answer keyword **profile grew 666%** (+20 quick answers) between Jan – Dec 2020