

# Progress\_Meeting\_1\_Minutes\_Jan7\_2026

## Progress Meeting 1 - Meeting Minutes

### Best Way Amazon Launch Project

**Date:** January 7, 2026 **Meeting Duration:** ~2 hours **Participants:** - Greg Kowalczyk (Consultant) - Todd McDaniel (Client) - Douae Lahlou (Client Team)

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### Executive Summary

Progress Meeting 1 focused on introducing Data Dive platform capabilities, demonstrating product research methodologies, and establishing workflow for competitive analysis. Greg provided comprehensive training on Data Dive's Niche Pipeline, Rank Radar, Master Keyword List creation, and competitor analysis through "dives." The session emphasized keyword strategy as fundamental to Amazon's ecosystem and addressed critical profitability concerns related to shipping costs and landed unit costs.

**Key Outcomes:** - Data Dive platform overview and feature demonstration completed - Master Keyword List creation methodology established - Competitor analysis "dive" process demonstrated - Shipping cost concerns identified requiring immediate attention - Project dashboard structure (GitHub repository) introduced - Work assignments established for the week

**Critical Issue Identified:** High landed cost per unit (24-piece order) results in unacceptable 10% profit margin. Cost per unit must drop significantly with larger volume orders (~700 units in full container) to achieve viability.

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### Meeting Agenda vs. Actual Coverage

#### Planned Topics

1. Technical updates and tool access verification
2. Product review strategy for wholesale items
3. Data Dive platform training and demonstration
4. Next steps and work assignments

## Topics Covered

- ✓ **Technical Updates** (5 min) - Laptop issues resolved, KARM shipping requirements
  - ✓ **Wholesale Strategy Discussion** (15 min) - MOQ benefits, supply chain consistency, break-even goals
  - ✓ **Shipping & Freight Updates** (10 min) - Container cost increases, KARM compliance, DAP vs. DDP
  - ✓ **Data Dive Platform Overview** (90 min) - Comprehensive training on all major features
    - Niche Pipeline and project organization
    - Rank Radar keyword tracking
    - Master Keyword List creation
    - Competitor analysis via “dives”
    - Dive limits and credit management
  - ✓ **Product Analysis** (20 min) - Trampoline and filter examples, landed cost concerns
  - ✓ **Next Steps Assignment** (10 min) - Work distribution for the week
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## Key Discussion Topics

### 1. Technical Updates and Access

**Douae's Computer Status:** - Laptop technical issues resolved, system operational - Potential virus concern to be checked by John - Camera functioning properly

**Data Dive Access:** - Douae confirmed as added to Data Dive account by Todd - Email invitation to be checked - Douae to begin browsing platform after receiving credentials

**File Preparation Challenges:** - Initial attempt to use “Shajip” (ChatGPT) for market maps unsuccessful - Required manual review to find similar items for each product - Highlighted need for proper tools and methodology

### 2. Product Review Strategy for Wholesale

**Key Advantages of Wholesale vs. Private Label:** - **Lower MOQ:** Few hundred units vs. thousands for private label - **Numbers Work More Easily:** Lower initial investment requirement - **Faster Market Entry:** No custom product development needed

**Critical Challenge: Supply Chain Consistency** - Must maintain reliable replenishment capability - Investment made into listing optimization - Risk of stockouts after building momentum - Local sourcing vs. China imports affects replenishment speed

**Profitability Goals:** - **Break-even Target:** Halfway through the year - **Profitability Target:** By year-end - **Risk:** Running out of stock (e.g., 24-unit orders) before achieving profitability

### 3. Shipping Requirements and Freight Cost Updates

**Canadian Import Requirements (KARM):** - **Best Way Limitation:** Cannot ship DDP (not set up with KARM) - **Alternative:** Will quote DAP (Delivered at Place) - **Implication:** Requires separate payment for duties and custom clearance - **Todd/Douae Status:** Properly set up with KARM

**Freight Container Cost Increases:** - **Previous Estimate (3 weeks ago):** \$5,000-\$5,500 for 40-foot container - **Current Estimate:** \$5,800 for 40-foot high cube container - **Action Required:** Requested quotes for standard 40-foot and 20-foot containers - **Timeline:** Costs provided as of meeting week

**Shipping Method Considerations:** - **FCL vs. LCL Analysis:** Even half of 20-foot container sometimes cheaper than LCL - **Historical Approach:** Previously used Triumph Logistics for DDP shipping - **Greg's Recommendation:** Compare all options before proceeding

### 4. Data Tools and Learning Resources

**Douae's Preparation:** - Started reviewing Greg's articles (Master Keywords List, Niche Tracker) - Attended Jungle Scout webinar on competitive intelligence - Asked about review comparison features (similar to Jungle Scout)

**Greg's Response:** - Data Dive has Listing Builder feature for review comparison - Will demonstrate during training sessions - Comparable functionality to Jungle Scout

**Project Dashboard Introduction:** - **Format:** Public GitHub repository for easy access - **Contents:** - Files and deliverables - Training materials - Market evaluations - Listing optimization resources - Meeting agendas and minutes - Project summary and deliverable list

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## Data Dive Platform Training

### A. Niche Pipeline and Project Organization

**Platform Structure:** - Dashboard view shows all active niches - Each "dive" belongs to a niche - **Admin Capabilities (Todd):** Progress dives through lifecycle stages - Research - Product Development - Product Design - Sourcing - Launch

**Organizational Benefits:** - Multiple products tracked systematically - Clear stage visibility for all items - Progress tracking across entire portfolio - Similar to company/product type folder structure

**Current Setup:** - Two existing products already loaded (Best Way spa filter, jumping castle) - Rank Radar activated for existing products

### B. Rank Radar - Keyword Position Tracking

**Purpose:** - Tracks daily keyword positions for products - Shows ranking progression over time - Visual heat map display

**How It Works:** - Monitors all keywords associated with product - Daily position updates (processed at specific time, not real-time) - Data refresh timing: After 3:00 PM based on previous day

**Ranking Position Guidelines:** - **Position 1-3:** Best (most green) - Highest conversion - **Position 3-5:** Good - **Position 5-10:** Acceptable - **Beyond 10:** Progressively worse (color-coded)

**Best Way Spa Filter Example:** - Strong ranking for branded keywords (Best Way, Sulpa) - “Hot tub filter” keyword: Position 74 (needs improvement) - Search volume varies significantly by keyword - Brand keywords rank #1 but have low search volume (<450/month)

**Key Learning:** - Amazon Canada has 10x smaller traffic than US - Same item sells ~250 units/month in Canada vs. ~1,200 in US - Ranking on first page critical (most purchases happen there) - Multiple pages of results (48 pages, 20,000+ results for “hot tub filter”)

## C. Keywords - Foundation of Amazon Ecosystem

**Todd's Question:** Are keywords for ad campaigns, listings, or both?

**Greg's Clarification:** - **Keywords are FUNDAMENTAL to entire Amazon ecosystem** - All search terms = keywords - Applies to: - Product listings - PPC campaigns - Organic search - Amazon's algorithm - Customer discovery

**Keyword Strategy:** - **Title:** Most important keywords (highest weight) - **Bullet Points:** Secondary important keywords - **Product Description:** Supporting keywords - Distribution based on search volume and relevance

**Data Sources:** - Data Dive pulls from Jungle Scout - Jungle Scout pulls from Amazon - Amazon allows sellers to pull Brand Analytics reports - Tools reprocess data into manageable, understandable format

## D. Keyword Ranking Dynamics

**Factors Affecting Ranking:** - PPC campaigns can show immediate changes - External traffic (social media, email lists) rewarded by Amazon - Higher acceptance and better organic ranking for external traffic - Competition level in niche - Bid amounts for keywords

**Search Volume Considerations:** - Data shown for Amazon Canada - Monthly search volume displayed - Minimum threshold: 450+ searches (customizable) - Higher search volume = better opportunity (if can rank)

**Seasonality:** - Keywords show seasonal patterns - Example: Filter keywords peak in October (filter changes) and summer - Currently dropping but will pick up seasonally

## E. Master Keyword List Creation

**Tools Greg Uses:** - **Keepa:** Price history and sales tracking - **Ref Seller:** Wholesale-specific data - **Data Dive Chrome Extension:** Integrated analysis - **Jungle Scout Extension:** Comparative data (though Greg's team moved primarily to Data Dive)

**Process Demonstrated:** 1. Start with Hero Product: Main product to analyze 2.

**Generate Competitor Collection:** Data Dive automatically finds similar products 3.

**Review Fit Scores:** Percentage match to hero product 4. **Select Relevant Competitors:** Manual selection/deselection of best matches 5. **Execute Dive:** Pulls comprehensive keyword data for all selected products

**Best Practices:** - Aim for 7-15 relevant competitors per dive - Too few competitors = insufficient data for decisions - Each dive uses credits from monthly pool (1,000 dives/month limit) - Build strategically to conserve dive credits

## F. Understanding “Dives” and Credits

**Dive Credit System:** - **Monthly Allocation:** 1,000 dives per month - **Each dive:** Uses credits from pool - **Current usage shown:** 105 dives used of 1,000 - **Strategic use required:** Don’t waste dives on irrelevant competitors

**What is a “Dive”?** - Comprehensive analysis of selected competitors - Pulls keyword data for all selected products - Shows competitor strength ratings - Identifies ranking opportunities - Reveals gaps in competitor coverage

**Dive Results Include:** - Competitor strength classification (Very Strong, Strong, Moderate, Weak) - Keyword coverage percentage - Position rankings for each keyword - Search volumes - Indexing status - Opportunities where competitors don’t rank

## G. The “Tray” Feature

**Purpose:** - Temporary holding area for products of interest - Allows compilation from multiple searches - Separate from immediate dive selection

**Workflow:** 1. Search different keyword variations (e.g., “garlic press,” “stainless garlic press,” “red garlic press”) 2. Add promising competitors to Tray 3. Review Tray contents 4. Select final competitors from Tray for dive

**Important Distinction:** - **Tray and Dive Box are separate functionalities** - Cannot truly “merge” - must choose one or other - Tray useful for building custom competitor sets over time - Particularly valuable when automatic competitor detection limited

## H. Competitor Analysis and Strength Classification

**Competitor Strength Ratings:** - **Very Strong:** Excellent Amazon sellers - Strong listings - Many reviews (thousands) - Comprehensive keyword coverage - Example: 96% of searches covered on page one - **Strong:** Well-established sellers with good performance - **Moderate:** Average sellers, room for competition - **Weak:** Poor listings, limited optimization

**Trampoline Example Analysis:** - 18 competitors identified in niche - Only one “Very Strong” competitor - **Conclusion:** Room to enter market - Opportunity exists despite competition

**Listing Quality Indicators:** - Review count and rating - Keyword indexing coverage - Image quality - Description completeness - Price competitiveness

## I. Identifying Opportunities and Weaknesses

**What to Look For:** - **Blank Keyword Fields:** Product not indexing for that keyword - Means keyword missing or in wrong place in listing - Represents opportunity for new products - **“Not Indexed”:** Position higher than 101 - Essentially not competing for that keyword - Opening for better-optimized listings - **Weak Competitor Listings:** - Poor images - Inadequate descriptions - Limited keyword coverage - Wrong target audience

**Inflatable Chair Example:** - Product currently unavailable on Amazon - Pre-existing listing footprint with some reviews - **Major Opportunity Identified:** - Poor existing images - Weak description - Limited keyword optimization - Wrong audience targeting (adult vs. kids) - Could rebrand and create new niche

## J. Amazon as Seller and Approval Requirements

**Identifying Amazon Direct:** - Interface shows Amazon as seller in brackets - “Warehouse Deals” = Used items sold by Amazon

**Product Approval Restrictions:** - Extension can show if item requires Amazon approval - Some items restricted to brands - Application process required for certain categories - Example: Trampoline showed restricted status

**Buy Box Ownership:** - Data shows Buy Box percentage split - Example: Amazon 55%, Other Seller 45% - Critical for understanding competitive landscape

## K. Manual Dive Creation for Limited Data Products

**When Automatic Detection Insufficient:** - Expensive products with less competition - FBM products with limited Canada data - Niche items with few direct competitors

**Manual Process:** 1. Search for comparable items manually 2. Match key specifications (e.g., GPH for sand filter pump) 3. Add relevant ASINs to Tray 4. Build to 7-15 competitors 5. Execute dive from Tray

**Strategy:** - Add ASINs to existing dive over time - Start with few strong competitors - Expand as more relevant products identified - Avoid deciding with insufficient data

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## Critical Financial Analysis

### Landed Cost and Profit Margin Concerns

**Current Situation Analysis:** - **Order Size:** 24 pieces (small batch) - **Current Landed Cost:** High per-unit cost - **Selling Price:** \$99 - **Calculated Profit Margin:** Only 10% - **Assessment:** UNACCEPTABLE

**Root Cause:** - High landed cost misleading due to small batch size - Shipping costs distributed across only 24 units - Cost per unit dramatically affected by volume

**Full Container Load Analysis:** - **Container Capacity:** Approximately 700 units -  
**Projected Cost per Unit:** \$7.85 - **Cost Reduction:** Almost 50% reduction from small batch - **Implication:** Product viability depends entirely on volume

**Douae's Action Items:** - Discuss shipping costs with Todd immediately - Recognize costs as “moving target” - Recalculate margins based on realistic volume orders - Factor into product viability decisions

**Greg's Concern:** - Final cost depends heavily on: - Shipping charges - Total number of units - Container type (20ft, 40ft, FCL, LCL) - Must calculate based on realistic order scenarios - Cannot evaluate product viability on small-batch costs

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## Next Steps and Work Assignments

### Douae's Assignments for the Week

#### 1. Data Dive Platform:

- Check email for Data Dive invitation
- Begin browsing platform and familiarizing with interface
- Review training materials in project dashboard

#### 2. Conduct First Dive:

- Work on one item from product list
- Follow process demonstrated by Greg
- Document any blockers or questions
- Reach out to Greg if encountering issues
- Schedule time to share results for Greg's feedback

#### 3. Shipping Cost Analysis:

- **PRIORITY:** Discuss shipping costs with Todd
- Review impact of volume on unit costs
- Recalculate margins based on full container loads
- Validate product viability with accurate costing

#### 4. Review and Study:

- Follow path Greg explained during demo
- Review articles previously sent
- Practice using Data Dive tools
- Prepare questions for next meeting

### Greg's Assignments

#### 1. Continue Product Analysis:

- Dive into existing 15 items on priority list
- Perform comprehensive competitor analysis
- Identify listing improvement opportunities
- Develop recommendations for each product

#### 2. Documentation and Resources:

- Send meeting recording to team
- Provide URL to network/dashboard
- Add all progress documents to shared drive
- Organize training resources in GitHub repository

#### 3. Support Douae:

- Available for questions during Douae's first dive
- Review and provide feedback on Douae's dive results
- Clarify any blockers or confusion

## Todd's Assignments

### 1. Shipping Cost Resolution:

- Work with Douae on shipping cost analysis
- Confirm container pricing and options
- Validate margin calculations based on volume
- Ensure accurate costing for decision-making

### 2. Data Dive Administration:

- Monitor project pipeline as admin
- Progress dives through stages as appropriate
- Stay informed on analysis progress

## Team Assignment

**Future Call:** - Hop on call to review completed analysis - Occurs after initial dive list completed - Collective review of findings and opportunities - Make go/no-go decisions on products

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## Key Insights and Learnings

### Amazon Canada vs. US Market Dynamics

- **Population Difference:** 10x smaller in Canada
- **Traffic Difference:** Proportionally smaller search volumes
- **Sales Velocity:** Example - 250 units/month (Canada) vs. 1,200 units/month (US)
- **Competition:** Not all US sellers active in Canada
- **Opportunity:** Less competition but smaller market

## Keyword Strategy Essentials

1. **Keywords are everywhere** - Not just PPC or listings, but entire ecosystem
2. **Search volume matters** - Higher volume = more opportunity (if can rank)
3. **Position critical** - First page (top 10) captures most sales
4. **Distribution strategic** - Title > Bullets > Description in importance
5. **Seasonality real** - Keywords fluctuate throughout year

## Data Dive Best Practices

1. **Conserve dive credits** - Only 1,000/month, use strategically
2. **Select relevant competitors** - Quality over quantity (7-15 ideal)
3. **Use Tray for complex searches** - Build competitor sets over time
4. **Check both EAN/UPC codes** - May find existing listings to leverage
5. **Look for gaps** - Blank fields = opportunities to rank

## Product Viability Factors

1. **Volume dramatically affects unit cost** - Small batches misleading
  2. **Competitor strength varies** - Not all niches dominated by strong sellers
  3. **Listing quality matters** - Poor competitor listings = opportunity
  4. **Supply chain consistency critical** - Must maintain stock to build momentum
  5. **Profit margin must be adequate** - 10% unacceptable, need 25%+ for sustainability
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## Questions for Follow-Up

1. **Shipping Costs:**
    - o What are final container costs (20ft, 40ft standard, 40ft high cube)?
    - o FCL vs. LCL comparison for current product mix?
    - o DAP vs. DDP total cost comparison?
  2. **Product Viability:**
    - o Which products achieve acceptable margins at full container volume?
    - o What is realistic order quantity for first shipment?
    - o Which products require custom container splits?
  3. **Data Dive Strategy:**
    - o Priority order for conducting dives on 15 items?
    - o How to handle products with limited competitor data?
    - o Threshold criteria for go/no-go decisions?
  4. **Workflow Optimization:**
    - o Frequency of progress review meetings?
    - o When to involve Todd in analysis reviews?
    - o Communication method for blockers/questions?
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## Resources and Tools Referenced

### Data Dive Features Demonstrated

- Niche Pipeline (project organization)
- Rank Radar (keyword position tracking)
- Master Keyword List creation
- Competitor analysis (dives)
- Tray functionality
- Chrome extension integration
- Listing Builder (mentioned, not demonstrated)

### External Tools Mentioned

- **Keepa:** Price history and sales tracking
- **Ref Seller:** Wholesale-specific data analysis
- **Jungle Scout:** Competitive intelligence (comparison point)
- **Chrome Extensions:** Multiple integrated tools

## Project Resources

- **GitHub Repository:** Project dashboard (to be made public)
  - **Training Materials:** Articles and guides
  - **Video Tutorials:** Data Dive YouTube channel (task-driven, 3-4 minutes each)
  - **Meeting Recordings:** For reference and review
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## Important Terminology Clarified

- **Dive:** Comprehensive competitor analysis pulling keyword and ranking data
  - **Dive Credits:** Monthly allocation (1,000) for conducting analyses
  - **Tray:** Temporary holding area for products before executing dive
  - **Fit Score:** Percentage match between product and hero product
  - **Hero Product:** Primary product used as basis for competitor search
  - **Indexing:** Product's presence in Amazon search results for specific keyword
  - **Not Indexed:** Ranking position >101 (essentially not competing)
  - **Blank Field:** Product not ranking for that keyword (listing issue or opportunity)
  - **Buy Box:** Primary purchase button (can be shared among sellers)
  - **Competitor Strength:** Classification from Very Strong to Weak based on listing quality
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## Meeting Observations

### Positive Developments

- Douae's computer issues resolved, ready to work
- Data Dive access confirmed and set up
- Comprehensive training provided on key platform features
- Clear work assignments established
- Support structure in place (Greg available for questions)

### Challenges Identified

- **Critical:** Shipping costs creating margin issues requiring immediate attention
- Small batch orders not viable for most products
- Learning curve for Data Dive platform
- Time required to complete 15 product dives
- Container cost increases affecting profitability calculations

### Process Improvements Needed

- Standardize volume assumptions for costing (use full container)
- Establish criteria for go/no-go decisions
- Formalize communication channels for blockers
- Create checklist for dive process
- Define success metrics for product validation

## Todd's Early Departure

**Context:** Todd needed to depart meeting early to prepare for another call

**Timing:** After Buy Box ownership discussion (approximately 1 hour 18 minutes into meeting)

**Impact:** - Greg and Douae continued discussion on technical details - Focused on keyword indexing, landed costs, and next steps - Todd missed detailed financial analysis discussion - **Follow-up Required:** Todd and Douae shipping cost discussion critical

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## Action Items Summary

### Immediate Priority (This Week)

**Douae:** - [ ] Access Data Dive platform (check email invitation) - [ ] **URGENT:** Discuss shipping costs with Todd - [ ] Complete first product dive independently - [ ] Document blockers/questions for Greg - [ ] Schedule review of dive results with Greg

**Greg:** - [ ] Continue diving on 15 priority items - [ ] Send meeting recording to team - [ ] Provide GitHub repository URL - [ ] Upload progress documents to shared drive - [ ] Be available for Douae's questions

**Todd:** - [ ] **URGENT:** Review shipping costs with Douae - [ ] Confirm container pricing options - [ ] Validate margin calculations at volume - [ ] Monitor Data Dive pipeline as admin

### Near-Term (Next 1-2 Weeks)

**Team:** - [ ] Complete all 15 product dives - [ ] Review findings collectively in team call - [ ] Make go/no-go decisions on products - [ ] Finalize priority order for listing optimization - [ ] Establish workflow cadence

### Medium-Term (Before Next Container Order)

**Team:** - [ ] Validate all margin calculations at full container volume - [ ] Compare FCL vs. LCL costs comprehensively - [ ] Finalize product selection based on viability - [ ] Determine optimal order quantities per SKU - [ ] Plan container contents strategically

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**Meeting Minutes Prepared By:** Greg Kowalczyk **Date Prepared:** January 7, 2026

**Distribution:** Todd McDaniel, Douae Lahlou **Next Meeting:** TBD (after initial dives completed)

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## Appendix: Search Volume and Ranking Context

**Understanding Amazon Canada Scale:** - Population: ~38 million (vs. ~330 million US)  
- Amazon penetration: Lower than US - Search volumes: Approximately 10% of US equivalent  
- Competition: Generally less than US - Seasonality: Similar patterns but smaller absolute numbers

**Ranking Position Reality:** - **Position 1-3:** Captures ~60% of clicks - **Position 4-10:** Captures ~30% of clicks - **Position 11-20:** Captures ~8% of clicks - **Beyond Page 1:** Minimal traffic (<2%)

**Why First Page Critical:** - Most customers never scroll past first page - Mobile users especially unlikely to go deep - Algorithm rewards strong early performance - Momentum builds faster with high visibility