

Jan 9, 2026

Products overview

Invited [Todd McDaniel](#) [Greg Kowalczyk](#) [Douae Lahlou](#)

Attachments [Products overview](#)

Meeting records [Transcript](#) [Recording](#)

Summary

Douae Lahlou, Greg Kowalczyk, and Todd McDaniel discussed product analysis for trampolines, where Greg Kowalczyk emphasized focusing on Amazon SEO and visual representation over just retail categories, while Todd McDaniel clarified that different size trampolines target different customers. The team addressed the challenges of selling Coleman items due to licensing restrictions, the highly competitive air mattress market, and strategies for creating new listings with new UPCs to maximize visibility, which Douae Lahlou asked for clarification on. Finally, they determined that splitting the trampoline niche for pricing analysis is possible and agreed on next steps, including finalizing costing, continuing niche analysis, and confirming brand approval for Coleman.

Details

Notes Length: Standard

- **Introductions and Weather Discussion** Douae Lahlou and Greg Kowalczyk started the meeting with a morning greeting, noting the sunny weather in Hamilton, which was a welcome change after a snowy week. Todd McDaniel joined, commenting on the mild and rainy weather up north, which was turning their remaining snow into ice (00:00:00). Greg Kowalczyk shared screens to begin the main discussion (00:04:44).
- **Trampoline Product Analysis** Greg Kowalczyk initiated a discussion on trampolines, specifically two items of different sizes (36-inch and 40-inch/48-inch) but within the same niche (00:04:44). Greg Kowalczyk suggested only selecting the best item based on pricing and features if the difference between the items was small (only 4 inches in one example). Todd McDaniel clarified that the 36-inch Wonder Jump is positioned for toddlers in the toy category, while the newer, larger one is intended for adults for exercise, suggesting they target two different customers (00:06:49). Greg Kowalczyk stressed that while retail divides items into categories, they need to focus on both the customer and the Amazon SEO algorithm, which is keyword-driven (00:08:08).
- **Visualizing Product Features and Cost Justification** Greg Kowalczyk highlighted the importance of visual representation, stating that a picture is worth more than a thousand words for determining cost and value, even when

specifications are available. They noted that the purchase cost difference between the two trampolines was about \$12, but the retail price needed to be justified against competitors, with an average price of around \$110, while some items were listed for \$60-\$80 (00:10:48). Greg Kowalczyk used a visual dive comparison to show that more luxurious items with better construction and features, like adjustable handrests, might have more sales despite a higher price, indicating that customers sometimes opt for premium versions, especially for products like trampolines for children, where quality and safety are buying factors (00:14:13).

- **Marketplace Overview and Keyword Performance** Greg Kowalczyk reviewed the marketplace, noting that the overall market is decent with a total revenue of half a million, but the majority of the market (70%) is driven by only a few keywords (00:15:56). They pointed out that major brands, such as Little Tikes, often have weak Amazon listings and poor SEO ranking compared to other sellers, even if they are dominant in brick-and-mortar stores (00:17:24). Todd McDaniel mentioned that Little Tikes' product is widespread, but a competitor, Best Way, released a version with benefits like a foldable handle to compete with it. Greg Kowalczyk concluded that in the Amazon space, many brands struggle with SEO, and visual presentation and price often outweigh brand loyalty unless customers specifically search for branded keywords (00:18:45).
- **Coleman Licensing and Listing Challenges** The discussion shifted to the ability to sell Coleman items, with Greg Kowalczyk noting that they are currently not authorized to sell (00:22:31). Todd McDaniel confirmed this and explained that Bestway USA, which manages the brand registry, sent a request to Coleman, the licensor, for brand access approval. Todd McDaniel is attempting to secure written approval from Coleman, as Amazon is requesting a Purchase Order (PO) proof for listing approval, creating a "chicken and egg" scenario (00:23:51). Greg Kowalczyk recommended holding off on any purchase until the approval process is complete, as it can be lengthy with Amazon (00:25:04).
- **Air Mattress Market Competition and Pricing** Greg Kowalczyk described the air mattress market as highly competitive, with a few brands dominating sales (00:25:04). They noted that Bestway's Coleman pricing is significantly higher compared to competitors, with Coleman's mattress requiring an external pump, while many competing brands offer built-in pumps and outstanding listings, making them more attractive (00:26:56). Greg Kowalczyk detailed that an existing listing can be a double-edged sword; while it might have an ASIN and UPC, using an old or incomplete listing means losing the "honeymoon period" (60 to 90 days of increased traffic and visibility) that Amazon grants to new listings (00:28:52).
- **Listing Creation and UPC Management** Greg Kowalczyk explained that creating a new listing is an option, but it requires re-labeling the original item with a new UPC code because the existing UPC is tied to the old ASIN, even if it is closed. Douae Lahlou sought clarification on the option to create a new listing versus using an existing one, to which Greg Kowalczyk confirmed the option exists, but using a new UPC is required. Greg Kowalczyk added that in private label, if stock runs out for a long period, relaunching or re-labeling under a different code might be necessary, and the second launch can be more successful based on the lessons learned from the first (00:28:52) (00:34:26).

- Splitting Trampoline Niche for Pricing Analysis** Douae Lahlou asked if it was possible to split the trampoline niche (adults vs. kids) into two separate views for better pricing decisions, as both items were grouped under one niche. Greg Kowalczyk confirmed they can split the niche and that they had already performed two dives: one focusing on the mini exercise trampolines (40-inch size) and another combining both types for comparison (00:35:39). Greg Kowalczyk demonstrated how to create a dive based on a specific hero keyword to compare “apples to apples,” focusing only on relevant items, and using revenue as a key indicator of buying activity (00:39:02).
- Managing Dive Allocations and Custom Trays** Greg Kowalczyk explained the process of preparing a dive comparison table, noting that they use a custom tray to select individual items if a broader keyword filter is not used, especially when they need to manually select items from various views (00:42:13). Regarding the fixed number of dives per month, Greg Kowalczyk clarified that adding items to a custom tray does not count as a new dive run; the items need to be added to an existing dive to be compared (00:43:44). They advised that 10 to 15 competitors are usually sufficient for the Canadian market (00:44:50).
- Exclusivity and Profitability Considerations** Greg Kowalczyk suggested that if Best Way has a good brand reputation and loyal customers, they should leverage that advantage, and strongly recommended securing brand exclusivity for their listings to prevent other sellers from listing products under the Best Way name (00:46:11). Todd McDaniel noted that Best Way is trying to shut down unauthorized sellers in the US and Canada, and official listings can secure exclusivity (00:48:23). Greg Kowalczyk emphasized that the final price decision relies on accurately assessing the item’s features compared to competitors. Todd McDaniel agreed that the next step is to use the dive data to assess potential profitability by considering landed cost, retail price, seller fees, and marketing costs (00:51:14).
- Margin Calculation and Freight Cost Allocation** Greg Kowalczyk presented an example showing that a target price of \$110 for a trampoline might yield very little margin after combining Amazon fees (referral and fulfillment) (00:52:28). They addressed freight cost allocation, confirming that the current calculation is based on the cubic volume of the item’s space in the container (00:54:04). Greg Kowalczyk suggested that for small-quantity items, dividing the total freight cost of the container (e.g., \$3,500) by the total number of units (e.g., 700) to get a flat cost per unit (\$5) can be advantageous, as it can significantly improve margins (00:55:19). Greg Kowalczyk concluded by asking about the company’s target margin percentage, noting that margins vary by category and selling method (wholesaler vs. private label) (00:58:10).
- Profit Margins and Marketing Investment** Greg Kowalczyk suggested that a 16% profit margin would be a good number for an established item, with 10% being the minimum without additional marketing spend (01:01:29). For launching a new product, especially in a competitive area like the trampoline space, Greg Kowalczyk advised that it is often necessary to go negative with profit margins due to aggressive marketing, potentially pushing ACoS (Advertising Cost of Sales) to 60% and TACoS (Total Advertising Cost of Sales) to around 30% initially (01:04:25). They explained that once the product starts to rank organically, the ACoS and TACoS should decrease (01:05:56).

- **Amazon Ad Spend and Organic Ranking** Greg Kowalczyk confirmed that beyond PPC (Pay-Per-Click), other ad options within Amazon include lightning deals and deal of the day (01:07:37). They explained that a heavy spend on advertising in the first few days is necessary to force an item onto the first page of search results, helping Amazon's bots spot it and pick it up once clicks are registered. Douae Lahlou asked if it would be feasible to launch strong items without any advertising, monitoring only the organic rank, and Greg Kowalczyk agreed this could be done, especially with established brands like Kman and Bestway, which already have a strong keyword base (01:09:17).
- **Using Data Dive for PPC and Keyword Management** Greg Kowalczyk confirmed that Data Dive provides detailed information for PPC, including a section for listing building and deep analysis into keyword campaigns and engineering (01:12:01). They noted that the tool tracks keyword positions organically and via PPC, and provides SQP (Search Query Performance) data from Seller Central, which is valuable for identifying keyword opportunities and adjusting campaigns (01:13:14). Todd McDaniel inquired about assistance from Amazon on ad campaigns, but Greg Kowalczyk advised that Amazon's advice is usually basic and geared toward increasing budget, suggesting that external expertise or in-depth self-study is better (01:15:01).
- **Analysis of the Pump Filter Item** Douae Lahlou requested Greg Kowalczyk's perspective on the 15 items under review, suggesting an additional tab in reports to track items that may not need marketing at the start (01:16:06). Greg Kowalczyk analyzed a Bestway pump filter listing, noting it has 106 good reviews and a 4.6 rating, but the current listing is FBM (Fulfillment by Merchant) and might be for a European 220-volt version, necessitating a check on market compatibility (01:17:50). Todd McDaniel confirmed that two versions of the pump (110-volt and 220-volt) exist and should have different UPCs (01:19:23).
- **Sales Potential and Pricing for the Pump Filter** Greg Kowalczyk estimated the competitor's sales for the established Intex pump filter (a market leader sold by Amazon) to be around 20–30 pieces a day during the peak season from April (01:19:23). They noted that the Bestway pump filter is an item worth considering, as there seems to be a lack of market competition for this specific size and flow, giving it a big advantage (01:25:59). Greg Kowalczyk suggested that if they can lower the shipping cost, the item can be profitable at \$249, but cautioned that Amazon might penalize pricing higher than Canadian Tire's equivalent item (01:22:47).
- **Strategic Advantage with Specific Pump Model** Todd McDaniel clarified that while they sell a pool that comes with the pump, a replacement pump is currently unavailable in the market, making this specific pump a great upgrade or replacement for a number of other pools (01:25:59). Greg Kowalczyk agreed that if this pump is superior and specific to the pool they sell, it is worth trying, particularly by minimizing shipping costs and allocating funds for FBA fulfillment (01:27:05). They also shared that they use "Ref Seller" for margin calculations, which includes Amazon fees, and suggested Douae Lahlou try it (01:28:22).
- **Sharing Niches on Data Dive** Douae Lahlou asked about sharing niches on the Data Dive account, as they were unable to see Greg Kowalczyk's created niches. Greg Kowalczyk stated that Todd McDaniel, as the organizer, would need to adjust the settings to allow sharing niches among all users in the account

(01:30:03). Douae Lahlou then shared their screen and asked for help finding the “dive box” to start a dive for the “bballs” product (01:34:12). Greg Kowalczyk instructed them to view the “dive box” on the search page, not the individual listing page, for multiple selections (01:36:03).

- **Next Steps and Item Review Strategy** Todd McDaniel outlined the next steps, including finalizing costing once container and LCL costs are received, continuing the niche analysis for the remaining items, and confirming brand approval for Coleman items (01:37:00). Greg Kowalczyk noted that having a list of small brick-and-mortar customers is a big advantage, as they can set up Amazon business accounts to fulfill orders from Amazon at different prices (01:38:35). Greg Kowalczyk explained that this business-to-business approach, including providing affiliate links, helps to bring outside customers and improve ranking (01:42:18).
- **Sales Prediction and Keyword Strategy** Greg Kowalczyk confirmed that they use competitors’ sales data for benchmarking to predict their own sales potential, especially for established listings like the pump filter, using keywords as a core element of the strategy (01:44:40). They advised that for a test batch, ordering 24 to 48 pieces is acceptable to minimize initial investment and see if the product gains traction (01:47:33). Greg Kowalczyk noted that the pump filter, being a highly-priced item with limited sellers, has very cheap PPC, meaning a small push with a few dollars a day can significantly help with ranking (01:49:29). They concluded that the overall strategy is to rank the item using organic traffic and PPC, even if Amazon is on the listing, by improving the listing quality and capitalizing on keyword opportunities (01:54:17).
- **Optimizing Product Listings and Audience Targeting** Greg Kowalczyk and Todd McDaniel discussed that maximizing sales sometimes depends on reclassifying items into specific categories or sub-niches, such as changing a “children’s chair” listing to target different age ranges like “kids five plus or seven plus” or even “newborn” (01:57:38). This strategy involves repurposing an item for a different audience by supporting it with images, text, and explanations for various categories, including addressing gaps like a lack of “gaming chair for... a girl playing Nintendo”. They also noted that having Amazon 1P status for an item might present a problem for resellers making listing changes, while 3P sellers generally have no issue 99% of the time (01:59:18).
- **Accessing Product Details for SKU Analysis** Greg Kowalczyk emphasized the importance of obtaining more details on specific SKUs for deeper analysis by DA. Todd McDaniel confirmed they have digital catalogs, which are PDFs, that link to item details by catalog and page number in columns D and E of a file (02:02:27). Todd McDaniel added that they could alternatively download all available images, specs, features, and copy points from their intranet for each item, which Greg Kowalczyk agreed would be important for DA’s dive, especially for technical items like pumps, to ensure correct competition selection (02:04:01).
- **Initial Item Selection Strategy** Todd McDaniel explained that the initial list of approximately 120 items was chosen based on a first pass, focusing on items that were new for the 2026 season but not yet selected by customers, or items that complemented existing products, such as a pump or premium pool cover, where a demand is known (02:06:53). They also included Coleman brand products, feeling an obligation to maintain a source of supply for their small and

medium customers, as Coleman is the number one brand in camping in Canada. Todd McDaniel acknowledged that their strong retail sales data from brick-and-mortar stores, like a single Coleman air bed SKU doing almost \$5 million in sales a year, could provide a unique advantage in identifying e-commerce opportunities (02:08:21) (02:12:45).

- **Wholesale and E-commerce Pricing Strategies** Greg Kowalczyk noted that some items, like a pump priced at \$52 compared to a typical retail price of \$39.99, may have higher costs due to being US inventory shipped over or fulfilled by merchants (FBM) (02:10:14). Discussing pricing strategies, Greg Kowalczyk highlighted that FBA sellers are strongly preferred over FBM sellers for winning the buy box (02:18:40). Todd McDaniel shared their experience with an Amazon spa filter where they used coupons to lower the customer selling price and gain the buy box without affecting the regular retail price, which was important for maintaining relationships with large customers like Canadian Tire and Walmart (02:20:09). Greg Kowalczyk clarified that all fees, including the referral fee, are calculated based on the price after the coupon deduction, though a separate coupon fee of 60 cents per coupon applies (02:21:20).
- **Challenges from Chinese Sellers and Logistics** Greg Kowalczyk addressed the growing challenges from Chinese sellers, who now represent over 50% of 3P sellers, leading to difficulties like the use of DDP shipments where items are often undervalued or reclassified to avoid tariffs (02:22:30). Todd McDaniel mentioned that their factory partners are not set up with Karm, meaning they will handle customs, which Greg Kowalczyk considered “not really a big deal” but an additional cost step (02:24:05). Todd McDaniel is also dealing with challenges securing liability insurance, particularly noting that the provider is “not keen on trampolines or or children’s infla swimming inflatables,” and major retailers require a \$5 million minimum liability insurance, which is very expensive (02:25:21).
- **Timeline for Ordering and Market Momentum** Todd McDaniel updated Greg Kowalczyk on the timeline for placing an order, expressing a desire to finalize things “as quickly as we can pin down” an order, despite an unhealed knee surgery affecting their wife’s health (02:27:49). They anticipate finalizing things within one to two weeks, aiming for an April start when the categories begin to pick up, acknowledging the impending Chinese New Year in February (02:29:11). Greg Kowalczyk stressed the importance of not stocking out, as losing inventory momentum causes the algorithm to stop recognizing the listing, leading to tanked keywords and a very difficult time reestablishing position (02:35:58).
- **Invoice and Future Business Expansion** Todd McDaniel confirmed receipt of Greg Kowalczyk’s invoice for Phase 2, which Greg Kowalczyk explained was a base rate covering training, optimization, and data dives within the initial hours (02:30:19). Todd McDaniel reflected that they were previously almost ready to “blindly order” due to small quantities, but now prefer to get educated before making decisions (02:33:30). They plan to focus on the current items to maximize sales before expanding the SKU count but acknowledged there are over a thousand items in the best way catalog and private label opportunities with 10 different factories that could be assessed later (02:34:36).

- **Inventory and Seasonal Items Strategy** Todd McDaniel suggested going deeper on items with year-round or longer seasonal usage, while bringing in less of pure summer items to sell out and gain learnings, possibly investing more in safer year-round items to maintain momentum and inventory. Greg Kowalczyk noted that highly seasonal competition still keeps listings active off-season and uses limited advertising two to four weeks in advance to “move that initial spark” (02:37:27). Greg Kowalczyk and Todd McDaniel agreed that the ability to order small quantities, like 24 units, is a significant advantage for maintaining listings, especially for high-ticket items like pumps where customers will find the product once an established footprint is made (02:38:45). Todd McDaniel emphasized that specific brand accessories and parts like the Best Way compatible pump are a great example of a need in the market with no current supply (02:40:01).

Suggested next steps

- ☐ Todd McDaniel will try to get a written brand approval from Coleman.
- ☐ Todd McDaniel will obtain more information about the trampoline item, including pictures and all the features.
- ☐ Douae Lahlou will start working on the bibles item today and send Greg Kowalczyk any reviews and blockers she encounters.
- ☐ Greg Kowalczyk will send Todd McDaniel a screenshot of where to allow other users to see the niches in the admin section of the account.
- ☐ Todd McDaniel will read through the file shared by Greg Kowalczyk and finalize the costing for the items.
- ☐ Todd McDaniel will look into the possibility of sharing niches across the account for all users.
- ☐ Todd McDaniel and Douae Lahlou will work on the remaining items and bring their findings back to review with Greg Kowalczyk next week.
- ☐ Greg Kowalczyk will massage the file and look at the rights so that Douae Lahlou can access and review the file.
- ☐ Todd McDaniel will take care of the invoice for phase two.
- ☐ Todd McDaniel will put information about best sellers, hard-to-get items, or items only one retail store carries, in a spreadsheet to validate the item for additional ecom marketplace.

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