Smart Search Platform Capability Guide

A detailed reference to Smart Search capabilities across search, navigation, merchandising, AI Product Discovery, Behavioural Discovery and recommendations.

Help customers find more of what they want to buy.
Precision. Discovery. Intelligence. Control.

Smart Search Overview

Product discovery is more than a search box

Customers don't always know the exact product name, terminology or category they need. They search. They browse categories. They filter and compare. They respond to recommendations. Sometimes they know precisely what they want. Sometimes they are still discovering what's available.

Smart Search is Red's search, merchandising and product-discovery platform. It brings together keyword search, navigation, filtering, merchandising, AI Product Discovery and Behavioural Discovery to help customers find relevant products while giving merchants control over what gets found, promoted and recommended.

Smart Search works within the wider ecommerce environment, connecting product and content data, customer-facing discovery experiences and relevant behavioural signals with the underlying commerce platform.

Three layers of product discovery

Capability	What it supports
Smart Search Core	Precision and control • Keyword search, navigation, faceting, filtering, sorting, ranking, merchandising and diagnostics.
AI Product Discovery	Meaning and intent • Semantic search, hybrid keyword and semantic search, product embeddings and meaning-based discovery.
Behavioural Discovery	Learn and adapt • Behaviour-informed ranking, personalisation, recommendations, demand signals, analytics, attribution and testing

Smart Search Core provides the foundation. AI Product Discovery extends that foundation with semantic discovery. Behavioural Discovery adds customer-interaction signals that can influence search, browse and recommendations.

Bring together the signals that matter

Capability	What it supports
What customers type	• Keyword relevance, product codes, terminology and explicit search intent.
What customers mean	• Meaning and context through AI Product Discovery.

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What customers do	• Browsing, engagement and purchasing signals through Behavioural Discovery.
What the merchant wants to promote	• Merchandising, ranking, weighting, product groups, availability and commercial priorities.

Customer intent + customer behaviour + merchant priorities.

How to read this guide

Smart Search provides a broad search and product-discovery foundation.

The capability available within an individual customer solution depends on the Smart Search services enabled, platform configuration, searchable data, storefront implementation and agreed implementation scope.

Some capabilities, including suggested terms, suggested categories and content-search presentation, require additional storefront implementation rather than forming part of a standard Smart Search migration.

Smart Search Core

Precision, performance and merchant control

Smart Search Core provides the keyword-search, navigation, faceting, ranking and merchandising foundation.

Capability	What it supports
Search Architecture & Indexing	• Modern scalable search architecture • Dedicated search processing • Scheduled indexing • Incremental updates • Searchable fields determined through the connected data and implementation
Lexical Keyword Search	• Conventional keyword matching • Inflection handling for different word forms • Stop-word removal • Configurable fuzzy matching • Partial/match-anywhere matching where configured • Improved handling of multi-field queries
Search Fields & Passes	• Multiple configurable search passes • Search across fields such as product code, name and description • Different matching behaviour by pass • Joint searching across multiple fields • Aggregation across search passes

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	• Weighted passes • Priority/boosted passes
Terminology & Identifiers	• Two-way synonyms • One-way synonyms • Spelling correction • Product-code search • Alternative identifiers and aliases where supplied • Attribute-code search where configured

Smart Search Core provides the foundation on which the wider AI and behavioural discovery capabilities build.

Search, Navigation & Filtering

Help customers narrow the range

Customers don't discover products through search alone.
Category navigation, product listings, facets and filtering all form part of the wider discovery journey.
Smart Search supports:

- category browsing;
- facets;
- filtering;
- product-list refinement;
- product codes and aliases;
- specialist product terminology;
- configurable search fields.

Search and browse remain distinct journeys but can work together as part of the wider Product Discovery experience.

Search suggestions & flyout

Where implemented, Smart Search can support:

- suggested search terms/type-ahead
- suggestions informed by indexed content and where appropriate, historical search activity
- matching category suggestions
- synonym-mediated category matches.

These are storefront capabilities requiring additional implementation rather than automatically being included within a standard Smart Search migration.

Relevance, Ranking & Sorting

Control what makes a result relevant.

Different product information can carry different importance.
Smart Search provides configurable ranking behaviour and field weighting, allowing different search passes and types of match to contribute differently to the final result.

Capability	What it supports

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Ranking & Sorting	• Configurable ranking behaviour • Field weighting • Price sorting • Stock sorting • Attribute sorting • Product-metric sorting • Multiple fields within a sort • Stock-aware prioritisation

This allows precise product-code and strong-name matches to remain important while supporting broader matching against descriptions, attributes and other product information.

Precision where it matters. Flexibility where it helps.

Merchandising

Put commercial priorities into product discovery.

Relevance isn't purely a technical decision.

Availability, new products, strategic ranges and product performance can all influence what the business wants customers to discover.

Smart Search provides merchandising controls including:

- ranking control;
- weighting;
- boosting;
- pinning;
- boosted or demoted product groups;
- promotion of new products;
- product segments;
- dynamic merchandising rules;
- channel-aware merchandising;
- stock-aware prioritisation.

Ranking can also incorporate product activity and performance signals made available to Smart Search.

Good search helps customers find products.
Good merchandising helps you influence what they discover.

Search Diagnostics

Understand why products appear where they do.

As more signals contribute to search ranking, understanding the result becomes increasingly important.

Smart Search diagnostics can provide visibility into:

- matching search passes;
- field-weighting contribution;
- synonym contribution;
- sort-field contribution;

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- search health;
- indexing;
- relevance.

This gives merchants and Red a basis for investigating and refining search behaviour rather than treating ranking as a black box.

Understand the result. Tune the experience.

AI Product Discovery

Understand meaning as well as keywords

AI Product Discovery adds semantic discovery to Smart Search Core.
Rather than depending solely on words shared between the customer's query and product information, semantic search uses product-data embeddings to identify relationships based on meaning and context.

Capability	What it supports
Semantic Search	• Vector-based search using embeddings • Meaning- and intent-based matching • Discovery where customer and catalogue terminology differ • Natural-language discovery
Product Embeddings	Embeddings can be built from configured product information, including: • product name; • descriptions; • selected attributes. The information used to represent the product can be configured to suit the catalogue

AI complements keyword search

AI Product Discovery works alongside Smart Search Core rather than replacing it.
Semantic discovery broadens the potential matches. Lexical keyword search preserves precise matches, existing terminology controls and merchant-configured relevance.
This is particularly useful where customers:

- describe what they need rather than naming a product
- use different terminology from the catalogue
- use natural-language searches
- would otherwise reach a poor or empty result.

AI extends discovery without discarding the precision and merchant controls of conventional search.

Hybrid Search

Widen discovery without sacrificing precision.

Hybrid search combines lexical keyword search and semantic discovery into a single result set.
Keyword search retains precision around exact product information, terminology and identifiers.

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Semantic discovery broadens the opportunity to identify products based on meaning and intent.
The contribution of lexical and semantic results can be configured through controls including:

- confidence threshold;
- candidate pool;
- score normalisation;
- AI score weighting;
- lexical and semantic contribution.

Filtering remains distinct.

Semantic matching does not automatically convert words within a query into facet restrictions.
For example, colour, price or product-type language within a semantic query does not itself apply the corresponding colour, price or category filter. Those restrictions remain part of the filtering experience.

Behavioural Discovery

Learn from what customers actually do

Behavioural Discovery introduces search and discovery signals based on real customer activity.
Those signals work alongside keyword relevance, AI Product Discovery and merchandising rules rather than replacing them.

Capability	What it supports
Behavioural Signals	Customer activity can include: • searches; • result impressions; • search-result clicks; • product views; • basket activity; • wishlist activity; • checkout activity; • completed purchases.
Search Ranking	Behaviour can influence product ordering within search results while existing product eligibility is preserved.
Browse Ranking	Behavioural ranking can also influence categories and product listings.
Personalisation	Relevant context can include: • current session; • recognised customer; • B2B company. The same context can influence search, browse and recommendations where appropriate

Let real customer behaviour add another signal to product discovery.

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Personalised Discovery

From broad demand to personal relevance.

Behavioural Discovery can progress from wider market signals such as popular or trending products towards experiences influenced by the current visitor, recognised customer or relevant B2B company context. Behavioural Discovery changes ranking, not eligibility.

It reorders products that the store would already make eligible. It does not override the underlying filters or commerce rules controlling which products a customer is allowed to see.

Personalise relevance without overriding the rules behind the customer experience.

Recommendations

Extend discovery throughout the customer journey.

Recommendations allow relevant products to be surfaced throughout the buying journey using merchant-defined relationships, product metrics and Smart Search discovery signals

Capability	What it supports
Product Metrics	• Top-selling • Highest-value • Most-viewed • Most-added-to-basket • Top-rated • Top-reviewed • Best product deals
Purchase Relationships	• Products bought together • Previously purchased products • Buy It Again
Manual Relationships	• Merchant-defined product relationships • Ordered cross-sell • Ordered upsell • Product boosting
Similarity	• More-like-this discovery • Similar-product recommendations using Smart Search discovery signals
Behavioural Recommendations	• Recommended for You • Customers Also Viewed • Customers Also Liked • Frequently Bought Together • Buy It Again

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Recommendation Controls	Recommendations can use: • weighted recommendation metrics; • product boosts; • behavioural signals where enabled; • fallback metrics; • current product; • search criteria; • customer history; • location; • product ratings; • stock availability; • session, customer or company context where supported and permitted. Rules and conditions control recommendation type, order, quantity and placement within the storefront.

Merchant control + automated intelligence.

Demand Signals

Respond to what customers are doing now.

Behavioural Discovery can use customer activity and performance signals to identify products attracting greater interest or purchasing activity.

Capability	What it supports
Demand-led signals can include:	• Most Popular • Trending • Most Viewed • Most Purchased • Fastest Growing
Performance signals can include:	• click-through rate; • conversion; • revenue per impression

These signals provide another input into ranking and merchandising alongside merchant priorities.

Combine merchant judgement with what customers are actually showing you.

Analytics, Attribution & Testing

Measure and improve the discovery experience.

Smart Search includes diagnostic and reporting capability across conventional search and Behavioural Discovery.

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Capability	What it supports
Search Reporting	• Search-term frequency reporting • Search-term exports • Search-flyout versus full-search reporting
Ranking Diagnostics	• Search-pass contribution • Field weighting • Synonym matches • Sort contributions • Merchandising signals contributing to product position
Search Health	• Search-health diagnostics • Indexing diagnostics • Relevance diagnostics
Behavioural Analytics	Analysis can cover: • trade; • customer journeys; • search; • recommendations; • products; • impact; • data quality.
Attribution & Experimentation	• Behavioural attribution reporting • Controlled A/B testing

This provides a basis for understanding how search and recommendation changes influence customer behaviour and commercial performance.

Test. Measure. Improve.

B2B Product Discovery

Built for B2B as well as retail.

Smart Search isn't limited to retail-style product discovery.
Technical and B2B customers may search using known product codes, alternative identifiers, specialist terminology or detailed product attributes.
Smart Search retains product-code and alias searching, with attribute-code searching also available where configured.
Behavioural Discovery can additionally use company-level context where appropriate.

This makes the wider capability relevant to:

- large catalogues;
- technical products;
- customer-specific ranges;
- repeat purchasing;
- specialist terminology;

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- established organisational buying relationships.

Complex catalogue doesn't have to mean difficult buying.

Configuration & Implementation

A Product Discovery platform designed to evolve.

Smart Search is a layered capability rather than a single search feature.

Capability	What it supports
Smart Search Core	Precision and control • Keyword search • Navigation • Facets • Filtering • Ranking • Sorting • Merchandising • Diagnostics
AI Product Discovery	Meaning and intent • Semantic search • Hybrid search • Embeddings • Similarity • Configurable semantic/lexical balance
Behavioural Discovery	Learn and adapt • Behavioural ranking • Personalisation • Recommendations • Demand signals • Analytics • Attribution • Testing

Capability Model

Capability	What it supports
Core Capability	• Search, ranking, faceting, filtering and merchandising functionality provided through Smart Search Core.
Optional Discovery Capability	• AI Product Discovery and Behavioural Discovery extend Smart Search Core where enabled.

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Configurable Capability	• Search passes, weighting, sorting, ranking, AI balance, behavioural influence and other settings can be configured around catalogue and commercial requirements.
Implementation Capability	• Storefront elements such as suggested search terms, category suggestions, More Like This and new content-search experiences can require additional implementation.
Customer-Specific Capability	• Existing bespoke search, facet or merchandising behaviour may require review and customer-specific implementation.

Product & Content Discovery

Extend search beyond products where required.

Smart Search can support product search and content-page search.
These can be enabled and configured independently, and semantic configuration can differ between product and content search.
Where a customer does not already have a content-search interface, storefront implementation is required to introduce that experience.
This allows relevant articles, guides and other website content to become part of discovery where that supports the customer journey.

Preserving Existing Search Behaviour

Move forward without unnecessarily starting again.

Moving to Smart Search does not mean discarding useful search and merchandising work already in place.

Existing:

- synonyms;
- spelling corrections;
- faceting;
- merchandising rules;
- business-metric ranking;
- B2B product-code searching;

can be preserved when moving to Smart Search.

The implementation process can review existing search behaviour, synonyms, ranking and merchandising, then establish an agreed Smart Search configuration around the catalogue and commercial objectives. The current Smart Search proposal explicitly says existing configuration, synonyms and merchandising settings are carried forward unless otherwise agreed.

Build on what already works. Improve what needs to work better.

Smart Search & the Wider Ecommerce Platform

Part of Red's wider Product Discovery capability.

Search and product discovery do not operate in isolation.

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Catalogue data, content, availability, customer context, storefront experience and the wider buying journey can all influence what customers need to find and how Product Discovery should work.

On the wider Red website, Product Discovery is the buyer-facing capability covering:
Search | Filtering | Merchandising | Recommendations | AI Discovery | Behavioural Discovery

Smart Search provides the platform and specialist capability underneath that Product Discovery proposition.

Connect Smart Search with Ecommerce Storefront and Experience & Growth to bring discovery together with content, customer experience, personalisation, promotions and wider engagement.

Smart Search

Help customers find more of what they want to buy.

Capability	What it supports
Find precisely	• Keyword search, filtering and controllable relevance.
Discover more	• Semantic and hybrid discovery beyond exact catalogue terminology.
Merchandise intelligently	• Influence prominence using merchant rules, product information, stock and commercial signals.
Learn and adapt	• Use real customer behaviour to influence search, browse and recommendations.
Understand the results	• Use diagnostics, analytics, attribution and testing to understand and improve product discovery.

Compete Differently. Grow Confidently. Never Stand Still.

Related Content

Product Discovery
Commercial overview of Red's wider Product Discovery capability.

Technical Product Discovery
Planned problem-led Resource for businesses selling large, specialist or technically complicated product ranges.

Experience & Growth
How Product Discovery works alongside personalisation, promotions, loyalty and customer engagement.

Ecommerce Storefront
How search and discovery sit within the wider customer-facing ecommerce experience.

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