

**EWR
DIGITAL'S
ULTIMATE
GUIDE TO
ENTERPRISE
SEO**

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WHAT IS ENTERPRISE SEO?

Enterprise SEO incorporates the common strategies of basic SEO. However, it goes a step further.

At a broad level, enterprise SEO does this by tying together the goals of marketing, web development, user experience, and branding departments. Besides uniting the common goals of these departments, SEO also focuses on page template creation. Through this, SEO strategies can deploy semi-automated on-page SEO.

Another defining aspect of enterprise SEO is the creation of hierarchical keyword targeting. SEO strategies often target high competition keywords. At the same time, they also strategically go after longer tail keywords. This is done by following an organized and hierarchical keyword plan.

By enhancing workflow management, content distribution strategies, cross-departmental collaboration, and implementing automation, SEO can effectively promote large sites searching for scale.

Enterprise SEO vs. General SEO

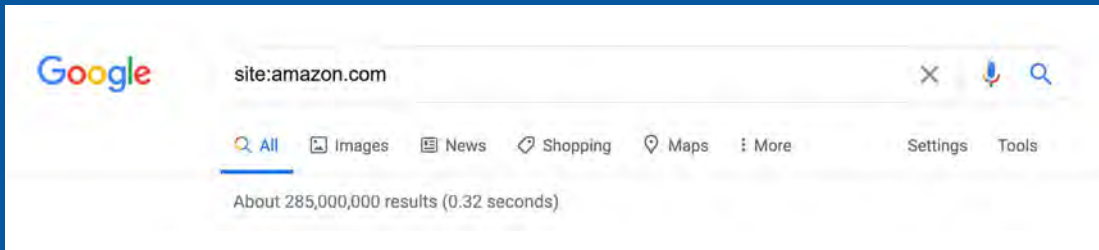
Now that we have taken a look at the basic elements of enterprise SEO, how does it compare to general SEO?

As mentioned above, general SEO forms a part of enterprise SEO. However, SEO goes beyond simply optimizing website speed and onsite SEO. Instead, the practices found in general SEO are tweaked and built upon in enterprise SEO to be scaled.

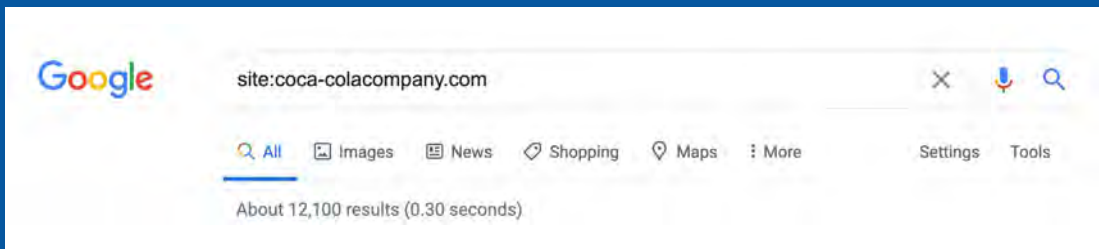


ENTERPRISE SEO CAN REFER TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEO WITHIN LARGE CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS, OR THE MANAGEMENT OF LARGE WEBSITES.

Amazon is a perfect example of a large website.



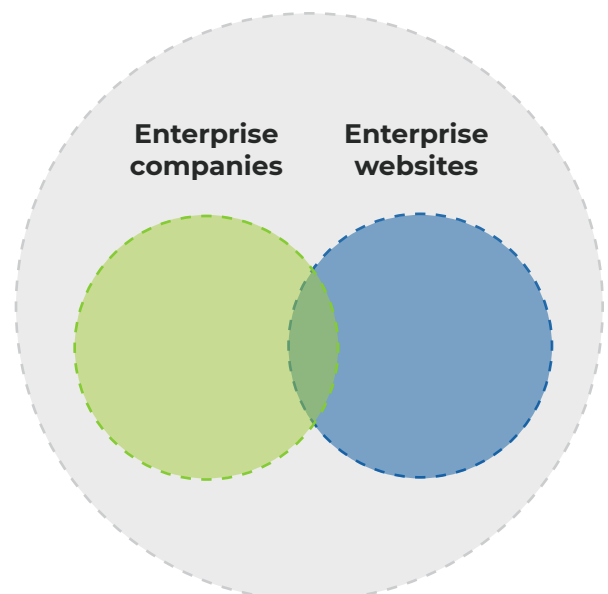
However, it's possible that some large brands will have small websites (those with only a couple of hundred pages). The organization's business needs will determine the scale of a website.



In the end it's best to consider enterprise SEO as an umbrella term that can either refer to enterprise companies or enterprise websites. Of course, there will always be some natural overlap between the two.

Enterprise SEO

Other aspects that can feed into the definition of enterprise SEO is the scale of traffic. For example, you might refer to a website that receives millions of visits each month as an enterprise site. Also, the amount of people involved in approving SEO actions and activity can be a factor when classifying a business as an enterprise.



Scale is the common theme that describes enterprise SEO. Whether it's the scale of the business, the scale of the website, or the scale of traffic. Since there are so many interpretations, our goal is to address the challenges of executing SEO in a large organization, as well as the challenges of managing large websites.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF MANAGING ENTERPRISE WEBSITES

Enterprise websites have a unique set of challenges you don't often find in other websites. Throughout this section of the guide, we'll dive into each of those unique challenges and how to handle them.

Here are the key challenges for enterprise websites:

- 1** Legacy issues
- 2** Content quality
- 3** Crawlability & indexability
- 4** Corporate environments
- 5** Website scale
- 6** Identifying issues



1 Legacy Issues

Those executing enterprise SEO strategies are often faced with the challenge of having to work with legacy issues: complex legacy tech stacks, unwieldy websites with years' worth of platform alterations, code additions and URL restructuring. This is not only an issue from a day-to-day maintenance perspective, but it can cause performance issues.

With countless employees coming and going over the years along you must expect that you'll encounter legacy issues. It is rare that an enterprise website was created and maintained properly over the life of the website. It's even more rare for the same person to have managed and steered the website setup from the start.

Legacy issues and poor technical foundations will impact your ability to perform effective SEO strategies. So, it's important to review your CMS and tech stack. This way you are fully aware of the limitations before you put all of your resources into SEO campaigns which could be doomed to fail.

To set yourself up for success, try and ensure the following wherever possible:

- Consistency of technologies and platforms across the websites you manage. This provides easier implementation of any SEO fixes.
- Make sure the CMS has the capability to add and edit key SEO elements. This includes, but is not limited to, canonical tags, noindex meta tags, title tags, internal links, structured data and sitemaps.
- Check that the database has clean data, including correct categorization and population of necessary descriptive fields.

ENTERPRISE SEO SUCCESS WILL BE LIMITED BY LEGACY TECH STACKS. THESE STACKS DIRECTLY AFFECT PAGE LOAD SPEED ISSUES AND ONSITE IMPLEMENTATION.



2 Content quality

Neglected content is an issue for many enterprise websites. The scale of these websites often leads to duplicate and thin content going unnoticed. These poor quality pages causes problems for both users and search engines.

Duplicate content can quickly get out of hand on an enterprise website. This is sometimes caused by internal search pages which can auto-generate thousands of new URLs — many of which have no unique content on them.

This makes it difficult for search engines to to crawl your website and find relevant content to add to its index.

Writing unique, descriptive content for every single page on an enterprise site is impractical in both time and resources. Instead, you need to figure out which pages add value to your business and then focus on improving the content on those pages. Then prevent the ones that don't add value from being accessible to users or search engines.

Here is a quick guide on figuring out which pages are worth prioritizing:

- Pages receiving a lot of traffic (from all sources).
- Pages that are crucial to the current customer journey across your site.
- Pages receiving a lot of impressions in organic search.
- Pages covering topics that are valuable to your business AND have a realistic chance of becoming ranked.

Not every page can be or should be improved. Two solutions for handling poor pages (ones that provide no value) is to redirect them to a relevant page or noindex them.



3 Crawlability & Indexability

For a website's important pages to be indexed and shown in the search engines' results pages, these pages have to be crawlable. This can be a challenge for enterprise sites since you may have to look through millions of pages to find the crucial ones.

The crawlability of a website depends on a number of different factors, including:

- Crawl errors
- Internal linking
- Canonical tags
- URL duplication
- Redirects
- Server response time

It can be harmful if Google and the other search engines are left to crawl as many URLs as they can find without proper restrictions in place. Excessive crawling adds to the business' server cost, but that's not the biggest risk. Your main risk is if search engines crawl too many low quality or auto-generated URLs, they could completely miss the new, valuable content on your site that you want to have indexed.

“ I really wish SEOs went back to the basics (i.e. MAKE THAT DAMN SITE CRAWLABLE) instead of focusing on silly updates and made up terms by the rank trackers, and that they talked more with the developers of the website once done with the first part of this sentence. ”

Gary Illyes,
Google Webmaster Trends Analyst

Encourage search engines to crawl more of your site's important pages. To do that, increase the visibility and importance of those pages. You can do that through internal linking, and restricting access to low quality pages that provide no value for your business.



YOU NEED TO TAKE MORE CONTROL OVER SEARCH ENGINE CRAWLING IF YOU'RE DOING ENTERPRISE SEO. CRAWL BUDGET IS IMPORTANT AND MUST BE MANAGED CORRECTLY SO SEARCH ENGINES CAN PROCESS THE WEBSITE CORRECTLY.

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Corporate Environments

Enterprise companies have large, complex organizational structures. These typically comprise of different departments spanned across different geographic areas. This results in multiple teams competing for buy-in at their company because each has their own set of goals and KPIs. This is why SEO resources are often overlooked in enterprise companies.

Enterprise businesses are for-profit, meaning that their overarching purpose is to drive revenue. However, since SEO takes time before showing a return on investment (ROI), it can be difficult to prove the value of a marketing strategy that often doesn't yield money making results within the first 3 – 6 months.

As a result, it can be a long and difficult process to get SEO implemented into the development pipeline.

Champions of enterprise SEO therefore need to be able to navigate internal politics, effectively communicate with stakeholders and be persuasive enough to get buy-in. Knowing who is making decisions around roadmap prioritization, and how to collect data that tells a compelling story are necessary traits for getting SEO projects approved.



IN ENTERPRISE ORGANIZATIONS, SEO IS OVERLOOKED DUE TO TOUGH COMPETITION BETWEEN NUMEROUS DEPARTMENTS.

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Website Scale

Enterprise SEO is doing standard SEO processes (such as optimising content, links and metadata) but at a larger scale. For example you might have access to make necessary changes on a page-by-page basis if you were at a small company. However, on an enterprise site you will likely need to get approval to make any changes. Even once you get approval you then have to find a way of rolling out those changes to thousands of pages.

In the end, scale will be your biggest challenge — the bigger the site, the bigger the challenge.



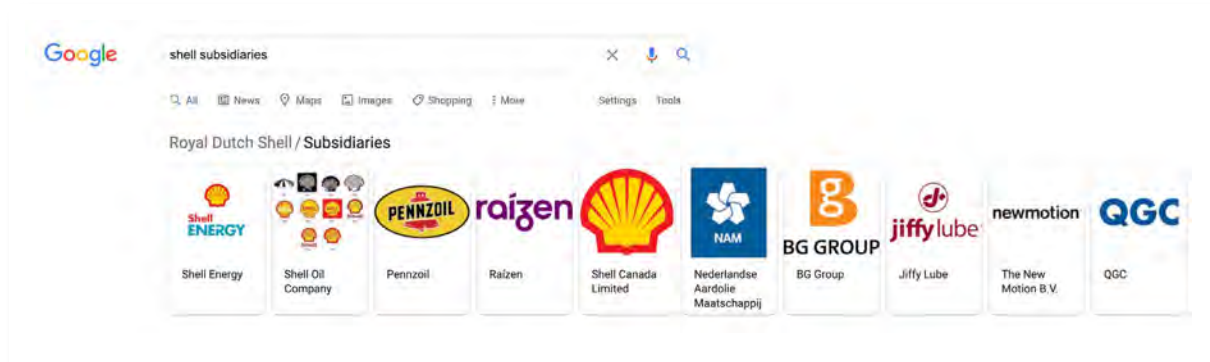
Neil Patel,
Co-founder
of Crazy Egg,
Hello Bar and
KISSmetrics

“Create content that teaches. You can’t give up. You need to be consistently awesome.”

“Don’t optimize for conversions; optimize for revenue.”

“Knowing how to distinguish between an ideal keyword and the reality of queries will help you to refine your strategy and success as an online marketer.”

Website scale can mean one of two things — either the size of one website, or a set of domains under the main company umbrella. For example, Shell is an enterprise company with a large number of smaller subsidiaries. Each of these subsidiaries have with their own websites.



So, whether you’re dealing with one huge website or a lot of smaller websites, you’ll have to manage a lot of data. This type of scale requires certain skills and tools. For example, Excel has a 1 million row limit. While 1 million is a huge number, it may not be sufficient for some the size of some websites.

This means that you’ll need more powerful solutions for handling data. You’ll also need efficient processes for collecting and analyzing data as quickly as possible (which we’ll cover further in this guide).

WHEN MANAGING ENTERPRISE WEBSITES, IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO EVEN KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN. THE SHEER NUMBER OF URLS WHICH NEED TO BE MAPPED OUT AND ANALYZED CAN INTIMIDATE EVEN THE MOST SAVVY SEO EXPERT.

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Identifying issues

Spotting issues when managing an enormous site or many smaller sites is difficult. If you're not careful you can spend a significant amount of time trying to identify issues. This is why you need to set up an efficient, streamlined approach.

In enterprise SEO, it's important to maintain a top-level view of performance and technical health of the website(s). You also need to detect issues before they arise. Being able to mitigate errors before they become a problem will save you and the business both time and money. Here are some examples of key elements you need to monitor on an ongoing basis:

- Increases in non-indexable pages
- Increases in pages with high fetch times
- Increases in server errors
- Increases in pages with duplicate content
- Increases in broken links

Use these elements to quickly identify a potential issue. If any of them start to fluctuate significantly, treat it as a sign that something is amiss.

Website crawling tools are incredibly useful and should be utilized at all times. Make sure to schedule regular crawls. This will allow you to see positive or negative changes between crawls at a glance.



MAINTAINING A TOP-LEVEL VIEW OF KEY ISSUES ON AN ONGOING BASIS ESSENTIAL. USE WEBSITE MONITORING TO STAY ON TOP OF THE TECHNICAL HEALTH OF YOUR ENTERPRISE WEBSITE.

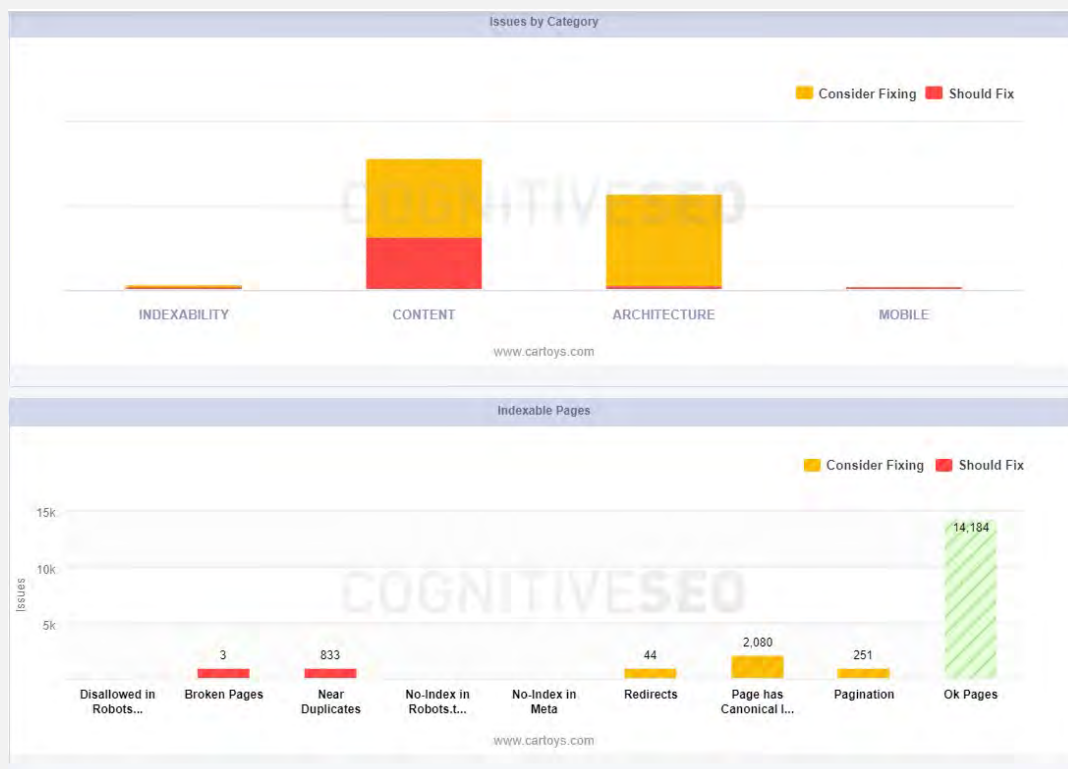


IMAGE SOURCE: **COGNITIVESEO**

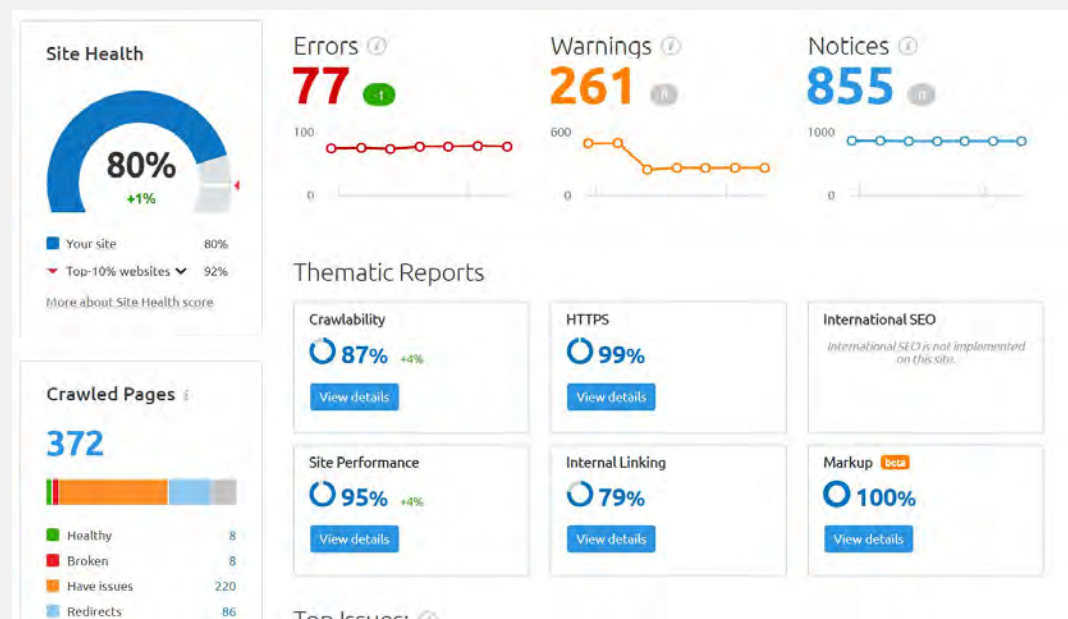


IMAGE SOURCE: **SEMRUSH**

HOW TO SUCCEED IN ENTERPRISE SEO

Now that you know the main pitfalls of enterprise SEO it's time to explore some of the ways to achieve success.

We know that working on SEO at an enterprise level doesn't always mean you'll have a big SEO team. No need to worry. If you're strategic, you can still achieve a lot with a small team. Here are 13 tips to improve your enterprise SEO:



Focus on Quick Wins at First:

Build trust in you and your team by finishing low effort, high impact tasks first. Don't forget to show the results you've generated as well. Doing so will gain the trust of other teams, and allow you to ask for your bigger projects.



Build Relationships:

As with everything, relationships matter. Make sure to develop connections with the major stakeholders in your company. This can help push your projects up in the queue. Also, make sure you have great connections with the tech team as well.



Understand Technology:

Make sure your recommendations can actually be implemented. If they can't be, it will be harder for you to get buy-in. To help with this, understand your CMS, frontend, tech stack, etc.



Find Hidden Resources:

Finding available resources inside your organization can be a gamechanger. To do this you need to understand the structure of the company. For example, the PR team can help a little with outreach and link building.



Align Goals:

While you may have many SEO projects that need support, the ones that align with the company's goals will be greenlit first. To put the odds in favor of the projects you deem essential, show how the company goals can be achieved by integrating your SEO project.



Development/Engineering Teams:

The engineering team should be trained on SEO and the importance of having SEO friendly implementations. In addition, you need to develop and understand their production cycle.



Develop Analytical Skills:

To get more resources and funding you have to show the results of your previous work. Don't wait for other teams to analyze the data for you. Instead, sharpen your Excel/Google Sheets, SQL and Google Data Studio skills.



Communicate Results:

Promote your work within the company via data and story-telling. You can create an SEO newsletter or get invited to other team meetings. Know your audience though and make sure you share information they care about.



Pick Your Battles:

Not every SEO solution you need is worth fighting for. For example, if you can't get your H2s in places and the semantic layout is broken, it's not the end of the world. Instead, fight for the solutions that will make a huge difference, not the nice-to-haves.



Make Them the Hero:

Always communicate results of your SEO projects to participating teams. and give public acknowledgement of their contributions. By focusing on making other teams successful, you'll earn their trust which means they will be looking forward to working with you again.



Ongoing Training & Refreshers:

People and teams will sometimes forget to implement what you taught them. Don't get frustrated though. They, like you, are constantly being pulled in numerous directions as new priorities emerge. Instead, train and train until SEO becomes second nature to them.



Integrate SEO into the Product Cycle:

Work with your product managers to make sure SEO is integrated into the entire product cycle. Keep SEO top of mind by defining the important touchpoints of SEO through the process.



Be More Than A Keyword Provider:

If keywords are the only thing other teams are asking from you it's an indicator that they don't see you as a strategic partner. So, understand their goals and success metrics so you can deliver strategic SEO recommendations that will help their projects to succeed.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF SEO

Building a culture around SEO is the most important step if you want to succeed at Enterprise SEO. It's not easy, but you'll need to educate stakeholders and your colleagues about SEO and why it is critical for future growth.

As you educate everyone on SEO make sure to emphasize the goal of developing a strong website performance from the start. Doing so means SEO won't just be an afterthought — it will be a driving force throughout the entire project. But, for this to be successful you have to get everyone to care about SEO.

Luckily, it's not as daunting as it may seem. With today's advanced algorithms, great SEO is focused on building great content and user experiences, not simply optimizing for the search engine itself. In the end it's all about providing quality experiences, and that's something everyone can get behind.

Since your website is the foundation for many of your marketing strategies, improvements to your website's SEO means improvements to the business's entire marketing efforts. So, when stakeholders and team members care about SEO, the whole business benefits.

Remember, Enterprise SEO can't succeed within a silo. You must ensure SEO is ingrained within the entire business.

TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN ENTERPRISE SEO, YOU HAVE TO BUILD A CULTURE AROUND IT. THIS MEANS GETTING STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERNAL TEAMS TO CARE ABOUT SEO.

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If you can convince your team to think long term and invest in mitigation strategies, you'll have a big leg up on the competition. Much like how today I'd take 10 email subscribers to my newsletter over 1,000 Facebook “likes,” I think in the future, we'd all much rather have 10 Google searches for our brand name than 1,000 Google searches for phrases on which we're trying to both rank and compete for a click against Google themselves.

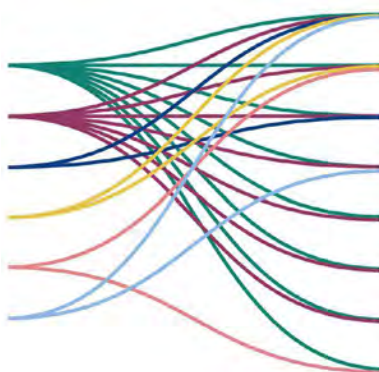
”

Rand Fishkin,
Co-founder of Moz



SEO Focus

Page Speed
User Journey Optimisation
Keyword Targeting
Onpage Optimization
Technical Improvements
Link Building



Business Area

Content
UX
Paid Media
PR
Affiliates
Email
Social Media
Development

Here are the four key factors you need to convince each team member of before they'll buy into SEO:

- ☐ Want to learn more about SEO
- ☐ Trust you as an authority
- ☐ Believe SEO is important
- ☐ Want to work with you

Growing your authority internally as an SEO

It may seem weird, but to successfully get internal teams to care about SEO you must first build your own credibility and respect within your company. By becoming the go-to resource for anything SEO related, your recommendations will start to carry more weight.

The best way to become the go-to resource is to prove you know what you're talking about when it comes to SEO. So, keep your finger on the pulse of the SEO industry and stay up to date with the latest news and developments. Then simply share them internally with everyone else.

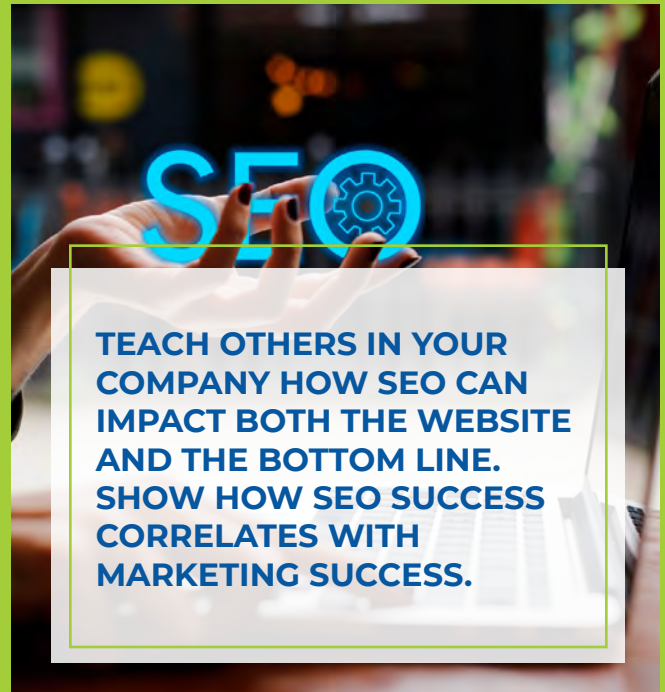
However, time is always hard to come by, so how do you educate yourself and still maintain your workload? Instead of browsing through a variety of different publications to find impactful news within the search landscape, find sources out there that curate this information for you. We suggest subscribing to newsletters such as [Search Engine Journal](#), or listen to SEO focused podcast such as [The Unkown Secrets of Internet Marketing](#).

**TRUST AND AUTHORITY ARE ESSENTIAL
IF YOU WANT YOUR COMPANY TO
CONSIDER YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS.**

Educating your company about SEO

Education is the best way to gain support for your Enterprise SEO efforts. In the end, stakeholders need to understand the value and care about something before they're willing to buy in to it. So, make sure you speak to them in a language they understand (no technical jargon).

The challenge will be educating them while still providing enough insights so they understand how SEO actually works. The best way to do this is to talk about high-level concepts. For example, they don't need to know all the factors that go into page authority. But, they do need to know that one strong page is better than a lot of weaker ones.



“

Enterprise SEO supports and benefits all of an enterprise's marketing efforts, including offline ones. It also controls and promotes global brand messaging, builds authority, fosters influential partnerships, and results in finely-tuned social messaging.

However, enterprise SEO is a complex, far-reaching, and large undertaking. It requires collaboration across multiple departments as well as strong leadership and experienced talent to implement.

In most organizations that do DIY SEO, web design and marketing departments head up SEO efforts. While this can work for basic SEO strategies, the complexities of thorough enterprise SEO implementation are often outside of these departments' scope. Interdepartmental collaboration can be especially challenging for one department, such as IT or marketing, to spearhead.



Enterprise SEO is a big undertaking, but it doesn't have to be complicated. By leveraging the information in this PDF and working with a proven enterprise SEO company's expertise, you can achieve big results minus the implementation struggles. ”

Matt Bertram,
CEO at EWR Digital

In conclusion

An enterprise website is an amazing tool, so make sure you're leveraging that asset. Unlike smaller websites, your website already carries with it a built-in authority and brand recognition. In addition, the traffic your website receives provides you enough data to perform effective data gathering and testing. You're able to quickly and confidently see performance trends and how it is affecting the business.

We know Enterprise SEO can be challenging though. However, you know have the knowledge needed to successfully navigate the struggles of doing SEO within a large organization. By combining strong analytical skills with great interpersonal skills you'll be able to build the proper relationships and advocate for your projects. Once you've managed to leverage those strenths, you'll have access to budget and personnel necessary for creating incredible results.



We truly care about your success and believe in the power of digital marketing. Typically we spend most of our day in client analytics and data trying to discover better ways to optimize for higher Google Search Results. We're constantly working to make our clients more visible to potential customers and collaborating with our team to get these complex strategies implemented.

Digital marketing is where data analysis meets behavior analysis. This is hands down the most powerful marketing tool ever invented, and will continue to have the greatest impact on our life's. Businesses big or small business should aggressive capitalizing on this trend as it matures, as it has for the last 20 years. Do not miss this wave!

As one of Houston's leading online marketing agencies, we bring the city's rebellious personality and strong work ethic into our marketing strategies — which means delivering more value to you. It's time to throw out what you thought you knew about SEO, PPC, and other internet marketing companies. We've developed new proven methodologies that push the search algorithm to move you ahead of your competitors quicker and generate more leads that will impact your ROI & bottom line.

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