HOW YOU SCALE SEO MATTERS

Achieve repeatable, consistent results in organic search when you scale your SEO

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In the two previous guides of this **SEO Center of Excellence ebook series**, we've covered:

- **How You Think About SEO Matters:** Why it's essential to think about the user rather than the search engine and how focusing on the user experience unites the SEO efforts of every stakeholder and team.

- **How You Approach SEO Matters:** Why standard operating procedures (SOPs) and detailed workflows guided by a well-defined SEO framework for task prioritization is needed to create repeatable and consistent results.

As those ebooks showed, each of those Center of Excellence components is integral in building a successful SEO program. This ebook will cover the final – and what can be the most challenging – of the three components: **Scaling SEO**.

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS IN THIS SERIES?

Check them out!

↓

> **BOOK 1**

Building An SEO Center Of Excellence

A Practical, Proven Way Every Brand Can Simplify, Structure, and Scale SEO

> **BOOK 2**

A Tested, Proven Framework For Successful SEO

Structure Your SEO

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THE CHALLENGE TO SCALE SEO

Everyone agrees, **enterprise SEO is hard**. But, **scaling enterprise SEO is even harder**. The simple fact is large, complex websites are ever-changing as they aim to deliver an exceptional user experience and meet user expectations.

The challenge in scaling enterprise SEO is to connect all teams that impact SEO to think about SEO with the goal to deliver the best search experience to drive consistent, repeatable SEO results.

Connecting the entire organization to think about SEO as part of their process is important. When you start with a single source of truth to measure performance and to make the strategic decisions to prioritize projects, deliver a strategy, and execute a roadmap that keeps everyone involved working from the same unified place.

This seems straightforward, right? Of course, but the challenge lies in:

- Working from, usually, a scare SEO team to pull this all together
- Collecting data from multiple sources that leaves the SEO team with no time to actually execute
- IT or product teams making technical updates, launching new products or services, and other site hierarchy changes that need to consider SEO
- Constant demand for new, fresh content
- Educating other teams across the organization about SEO and best practices
- Multiple teams working in different countries or on different domains

For most brands, nearly every team has an impact on SEO, this includes:

- User experience teams
- Content writers
- Graphic designers
- Product managers
- IT & Development teams
- Marketing
- Analytics

No one person can perform all these roles. Managing a website is a team effort.

To do this, you need accurate, reliable data and alignment to a single source of truth - which drives the insights needed. Did you know that marketers alone use nine or more tools in their daily jobs? When you align all SEO data, metrics, and capabilities into one place, it aligns your team to the same objective. Eliminating the guessing game on what and how to prioritize SEO.

And to do that, you need the right tools (aka, technology).
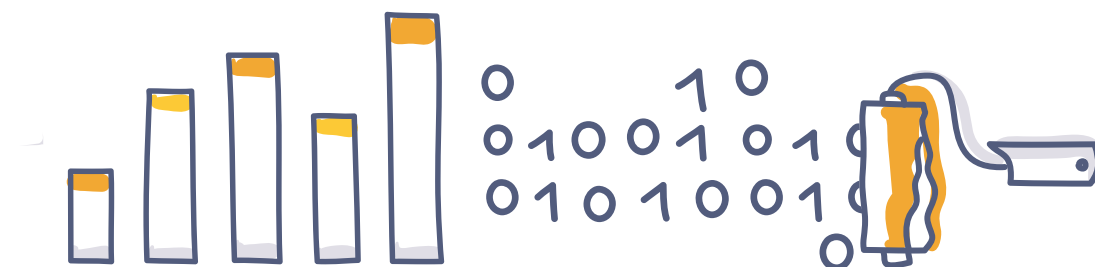
TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATES SEO SUCCESS

Tools save time. Every tool, however, has a limit to the degree of improvement in speed, or scale, that it can deliver.

In the world of SEO, technology is no different.

While a person might be able to collect the data supplied by Google Analytics, technology gathers the data or produces the reports for analysis quickly. Google Analytics doesn't interpret data or see insights, it simply collects, organizes and reports the data it does collect in the way you want to see it.

Of course, in the world of SEO, there are more tools needed than the website data from Google Analytics. For a website to deliver SEO-friendly pages and content for a quality user experience, you also need:

- Competitive landscape
- Ranking performance and analysis
- Keyword research
- Link management
- Technical site audits
- Content optimization

As the Martech Technology Landscape Supergraphic of the top 5,000 (or 6,829 for 2018) shows, there's not a lack of technologies for an SEO team to use!

The question SEOs and marketers face when it comes to technology is whether the tools you are using is accelerating SEO or if they bring limitations creating more work to collect and analyze the data points.

Ultimately, technology should save time and improve an effort. For SEO, this means higher rankings and having a fully technically functional site that delivers great content and an amazing search experience.

Disconnected techs – and the data silos they create – creates a barrier that inhibits your ability to scale the SEO effort to meet the demands of the website. The three typical growth barriers are:

- **Data Acquisition/Analysis/Reporting:** For SEOs, the tools available to collect data may be awesome, but if the time it takes to acquire, aggregate and analyze creates limitations on the ability to gain the insights and report ROI, it can limit your ability to scale.

- **No Single Source of Truth:** Data from one system often does not match the data provided by another. Separate teams using their own systems nationally, and especially internationally, and the problem becomes more complicated. Time is then lost either on efforts trying to resolve these discrepancies or on efforts that do not yield results.

- **Learning:** Time is needed for users to learn and use any technology. More technologies mean more time spent (and money too!) learning, maintaining and hopping between screens.

Eliminate these time-consuming barriers and the time you save can be spent on strategy, execution, and planning.

- SEOs can focus on strategy.
- Content creators, analysts, marketers and other stakeholders can perform their tasks without data bottlenecks as trusted data makes democratization of SEO possible.
- High priority technical issues can be quickly identified and addressed.

The reality of SEO is simple. The technologies that gather data are essential. They measure success and are leveraged to develop the right strategies and assign the correct skill-set resources to every tactic.

The time it takes an SEO or SEO team to make sense of the data, use it, and keep stakeholders current on disconnected systems, however, can be a big barrier to improving efficiencies and aligning the human resources with larger goals.

And it's not just us who is saying it.

NEVER TOO MUCH DATA

There's never too much data. There are only limitations presented by the need to organize, manage and make sense of it. In an age of machine-learning and artificial intelligence that can do this work for us, we have to ask ourselves, why would we accept artificial limitations?
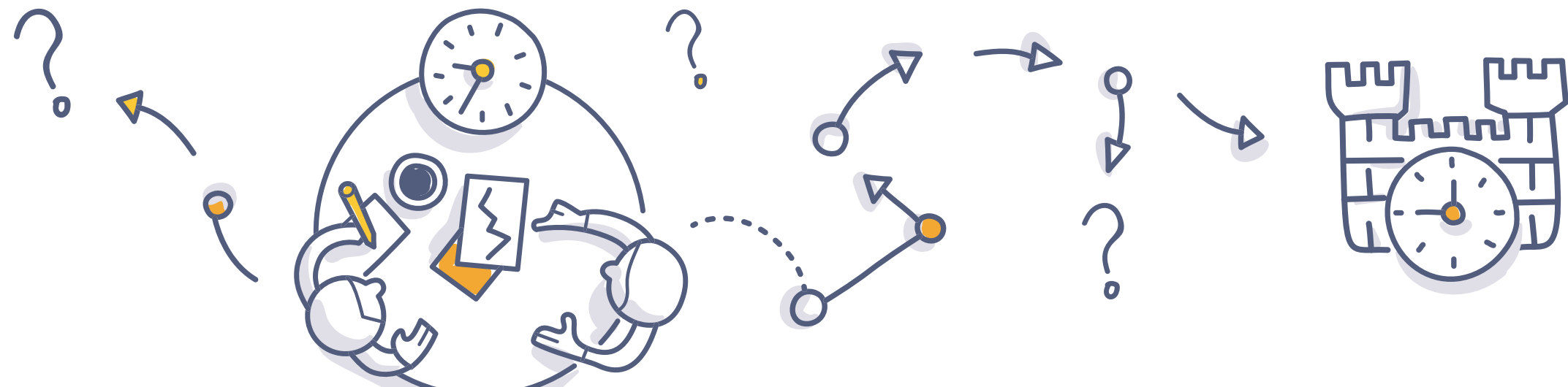
DATA DRIVES SEOS TO DIRECT STRATEGY

" I want to be an Excel data jockey, said no SEO ever.

Data empowers an SEO to inform marketing, IT and executive teams of audience and customer trends, website performance concerns and more. With it, SEOs become integral forces in directing strategy.

The execution of strategy can't happen though if an SEO spends a majority of the day on data acquisition, reporting and analysis, which happens to be what 77% of SEOs told us is how they spent their time.

That's a lot of time hopping between tools, downloading data and then analyzing it in excel or another business intelligence tool.
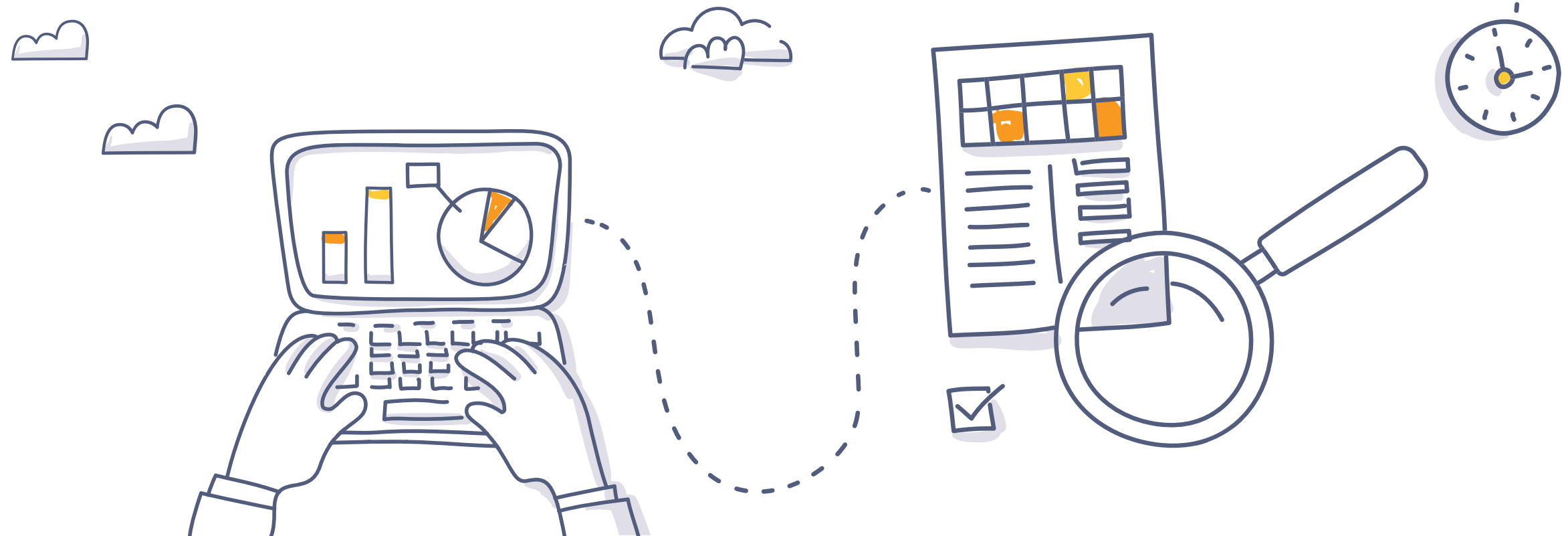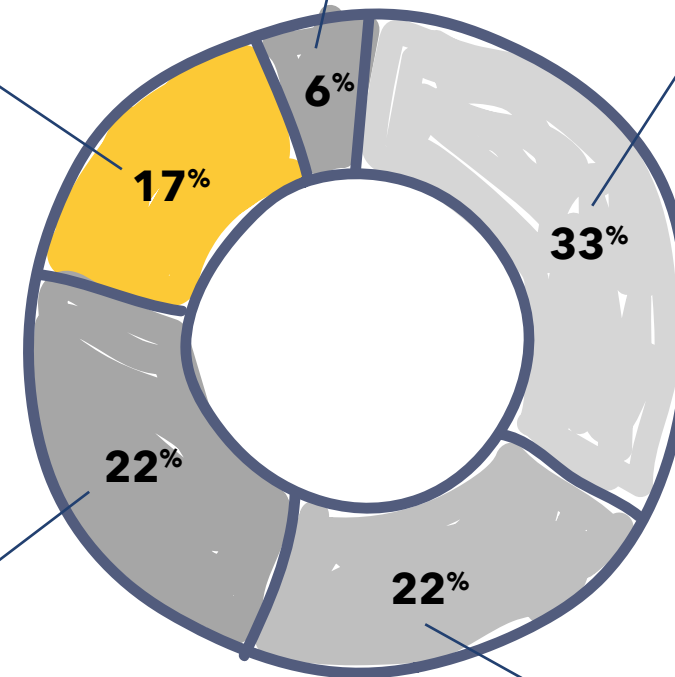
EDUCATION:

6% of an 8-hour work day is less than 30 minutes. That's not a lot of time invested in keeping up with the ever-evolving world of SEO. Ideally, you want to aim for at least an hour, or about 14% of your work-day.

DATA ACQUISITION:

It's a long day when you spend more than 2 ½ hours chasing down, collecting, consolidating and building spreadsheets of data. Your tools should do the work for you. The 5 minutes it takes to open your email should be all the time you spend collecting data.

EXECUTION:

17% means an SEO spends less than 1½ hours a day planning strategy, working on tactics, training stakeholders, coordinating efforts and providing guidance on SEO. Ideally, an SEO's goal should be to spend at least 5 ½ hours per work day on tasks such as strategy and guidance that drive the SEO program forward.

6%

17%

33%

22%

22%

REPORTING:

Here's another 105+ minutes spent building understandable spreadsheets and reports. Isn't technology supposed to do the work for you? Anything more than 30 minutes a day on reporting is too much.

RESEARCH/ANALYSIS:

105+ minutes spent sorting, filtering and organizing data to understand audience response, SEO program success, and find insight isn't awful, but most of the time is spent manipulating the data, isn't it? If all the data was easily available, the task could be done in 30-minutes.

How You Scale SEO Matters

All of this data comes from the SEOs we surveyed and prompts a question:

Why is so much human capital being spent on menial tasks like data acquisition, analysis and reporting when AI guided by machine-learning can do it for you?

There are two ways to overcome this barrier:

- Hire a lot more staff
- Consolidate the tech stack to create a single source of truth, eliminate the data disconnect and simplify the learning and use.

Of the two, the simplest and most cost-effective is to consolidate the tech stack.

ALL ABOUT THAT TECH

For SEO, technology is essential. Disconnected technologies that require time spent on data aggregation, analysis and reporting creates a limitation. The combination of a large website, big tech stack and the disconnected data impede scaling SEO.

BEST

OPTION
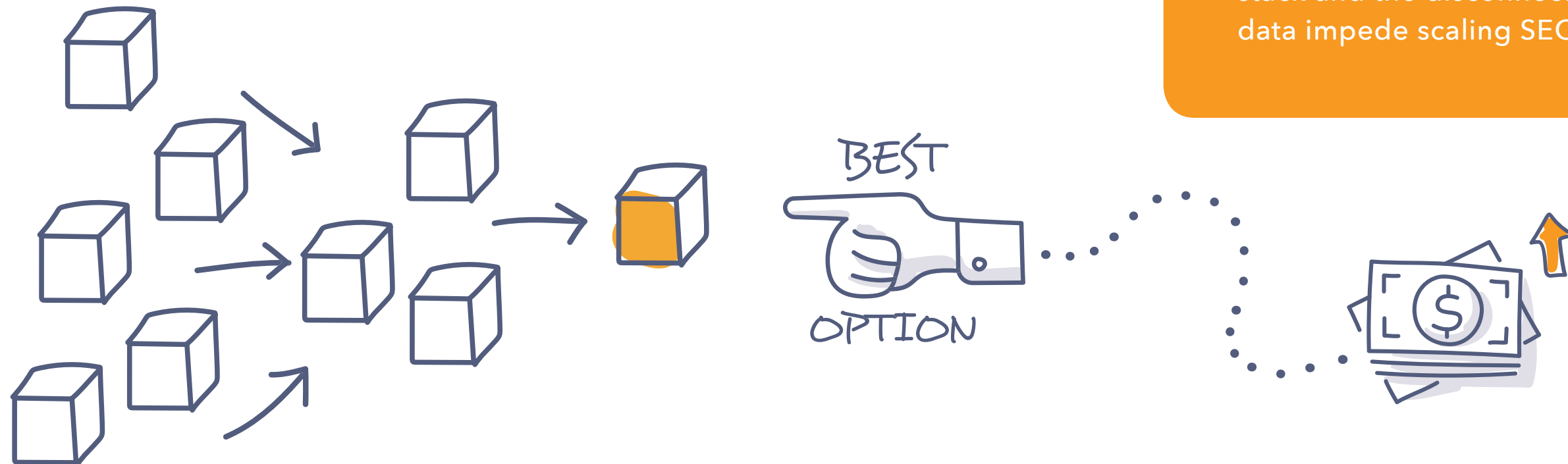
BENEFITS OF A SINGLE, CONSOLIDATED SEO PLATFORM

Although there are an extensive number of SEO tools, they can be grouped into 6 primary categories.

- Rankings
- Content Marketing
- Technical SEO
- Keyword Research
- SEO Analytics
- Link Management

An SEO platform unifies these in a single source, putting all the data, analysis tools, and reporting in one place. This eliminates menial tasks. It also makes it possible to remove limitations on data.

When all six components are combined, the platform:

- Makes all SEO-related efforts more manageable.
- Offers a tool usable by stakeholders at every knowledge level.
- Simplifies democratization of SEO with appropriate people and departments.
- Improves productivity for all contributors and SEOs.
- Sets a foundation for consistent, repeatable results.
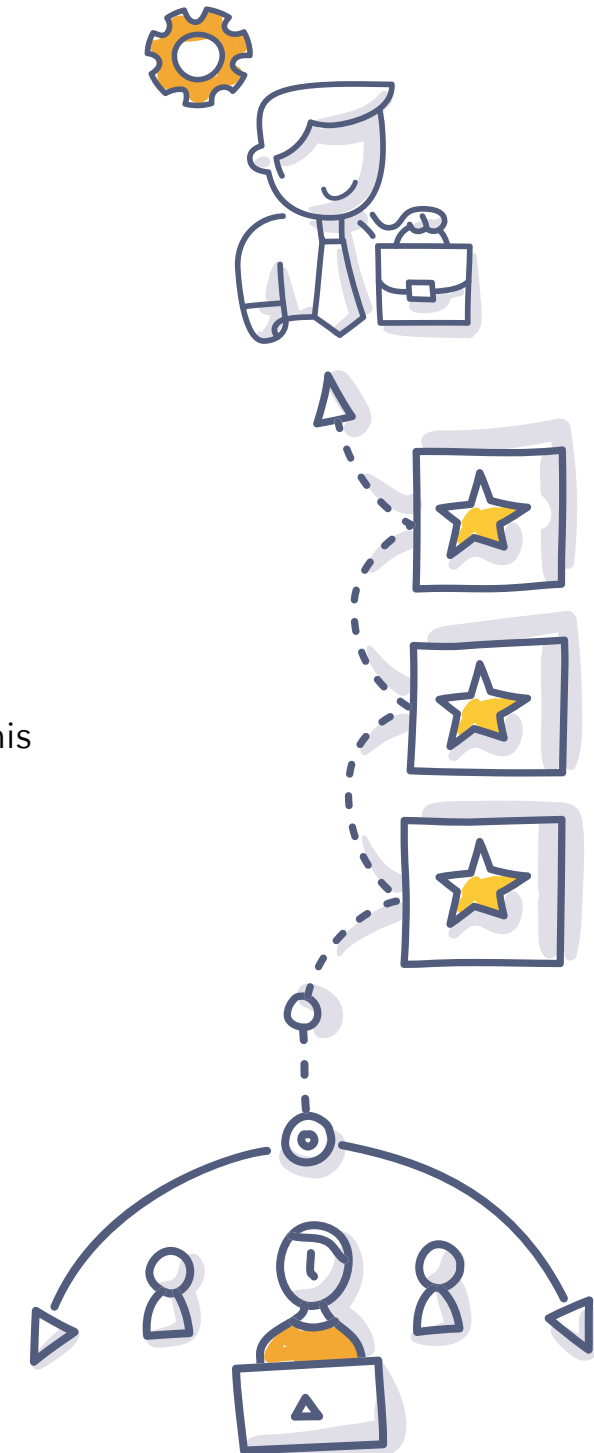
KEY FEATURES OF AN ENTERPRISE SEO PLATFORM

A single, consolidated enterprise SEO platform should make data acquisition, analysis and reporting simpler and less-time consuming and include all of the following capabilities:

RANKING DATA

Frequency of data collection by the platform is essential. In competitive industries, daily rank tracking data is vital. The amount of data available should also be considered and feature Universal Rank Types like AMP, Answer Box, Local Listings and more for an accurate industry perspective. Some questions to consider when evaluating a rank tracker:

Accuracy

- Does the company you're working with own that process of collecting the data?
- How much transparency is there in the data you see?
- Does the tool leverage a third party supplier that creates any potential limitations to how much data freshness and how can be provided?

Reliability

- How are ranking results delivered?
- If tracking ranking data from the United Kingdom and the United States, will it retrieve your data from the correct geo-location?
- Are rankings delivered on-time and consistently?
- Does the tool keep up with the changes in the SERP?

Scale

- Can you analyze and use the data provided at scale through their user experience within the tool?
- Can you easily export the data to integrate into your data warehouses?

After all, in an age when most people walk around with mini-computers loaded with massive amounts of memory and storage in their hands, is there any reason a system cannot provide unlimited keyword capacity or competitive tracking for all countries and search engines?

CONTENT MARKETING TOOLS

Content creators need a steady stream of content ideas. User data from keywords, audience, and on-page SEO tools drive and inform content creation and optimization to uncover trends, understand what resonates with users and produce authoritative, relevant content. An AI-enabled technology offers greater insight by identifying and connecting related data points based on user behavior. Repeatable content workflows are also important for keeping content production on schedule and aligned with audience trends.

TECHNICAL SEO AUDITS

Nothing kills an SEO effort as fast as an un-usable site. An exceptional user experience relies on uninterrupted site functionality. The ability to perform technical SEO site audits that include, unlimited page crawls and crawl projects as well as search engine bots log-file analysis for large sites are essential to keep complex websites error-free.

KEYWORD RESEARCH

Keyword recency is essential, as is keyword database quality - that includes both desktop and mobile ranking data of the entire search landscape. Some questions to consider include:

- Is the data their own proprietary keyword research database?
- How often is it updated?
- Is my industry and location covered? If not, can I contribute to the database?

SEO ANALYTICS & REPORTING

Analysis and reporting tools should make it easy to "slice and dice" the data. Ideally you want the ability to set KPIs and goals, customize dashboards, forecast traffic and get reporting - without killing time finegaling with Excel spreadsheets.

LINK MANAGEMENT

Internal and external links play such a vital role in SEO. The ability to track managed links, identify toxic links and manage a disavow list is essential.

ONE ADDITIONAL SEO PLATFORM FEATURE TO CONSIDER

In our experience, however, there is one more element needed to make it truly scalable: Advanced Support Services.

Support and services are often equated with customer service. In terms of a platform that truly makes SEO scalable, we suggest the term goes further to include:

- Ongoing Training Opportunities
- Dedicated, strategic client manager
- Project Management
- SEO Professional Services, including strategic consultation and for ad-hoc projects
- Platform Development Path

On this last item, it's important to note that companies that develop and bring SEO platforms to market each have their own ways of determining a development path. For example, seoClarity takes the approach that if two clients request a feature, we'll build it. It's a question worth asking when evaluating a platform.

GET THE CHECKLIST

For a simple guide and complete evaluation of each of these seven features, check out our **Enterprise SEO Platform Checklist.**

FIND THE TOOL THAT WILL ACCELERATE YOUR SEO SUCCESS

SEO is hard. You can prioritize user experience, have a solid framework and workflows in place, and still get tripped up on the vast amount of data provided by disconnected technologies.

There's only one solution to this challenge. Consolidate your technologies into a unified platform that establishes a single source of truth and empowers everyone to work more efficiently by eliminating bottlenecks and menial tasks.

An enterprise SEO platform does just this.

An SEO platform, however, only makes scaling possible if the first two elements of a Center of Excellence are in place:

1. A focus on user experience that simplifies SEO, and
2. Well-defined workflows and standard operating procedures that follow a simplified and practical framework.

The SEO Center of Excellence combines these three elements into a practical approach. It's not simply an idea. It's a proven approach used everyday by the most successful enterprise SEO teams in the world.

We've developed and refined the practice of the SEO Center of Excellence approach through collaboration with those same companies that use it daily. In a way, it's a lot like the seoClarity platform which was developed based on the needs and challenges faced and shared with us by our clients.

SEO may be hard, but with the right tools, you can eliminate barriers and Simplify, Structure, and Scale your SEO effort to achieve consistent and repeatable success.

We invite you to download the Enterprise SEO Platform Checklist to evaluate your tools and determine the enterprise SEO platform that's right for you. Contact us to take a tour of the seoClarity platform and learn more about the SEO Center of Excellence approach.

CONSISTENT & REPEATABLE
RESULTS AHEAD

To learn how to adopt the URA framework, evaluate a platform solution, or to achieve SEO success at scale, contact us today.

Download the SEO Checklist

Our easy-to-use checklist will help you evaluate an enterprise SEO platform so you can implement the best workflows for success.

Download the SEO Checklist >

Schedule A Free Demo

Request an demo of our platform and let our team provide insights on how to implement an SEO Center of Excellence at your company.

Schedule a Free Demo >

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