



The 2025

State of SEO Report

2024 in review, AI in SEO, & 2025 Priorities

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The State of SEO

Introduction

State of SEO: What 2024 was like and what we expect for 2025

In the constantly changing digital landscape, SEO continues to be one of the most cost-effective and reliable strategies to increase brand visibility, organic website traffic, and overall business growth.

While the core principles of SEO remain the same, 2024 ushered in the most significant disruption to the search landscape in over a decade: Google's AIO, the AI-powered search experience formerly known as SGE.

The new search experience was launched to all users in North America in May 2024, with multiple regions following soon after.

This disruption and the widespread adoption of generative AI in 2024 presented both challenges and opportunities for digital experts involved in SEO.

Despite the dynamic nature of SEO, its impact on website performance remains undeniable.

- On average, organic search produced 33% of overall website traffic across seven key industries in 2024.
- **91% of respondents reported that SEO positively impacted** website performance and marketing goals in 2024, according to our 2025 State of SEO Survey.

With all eyes on the future, organic search continues to be a crucial channel for business growth.

To help you stay ahead of the curve and optimize your SEO strategy for success in 2025, we surveyed **over 350 digital marketing, SEO, and content marketing experts** to uncover actionable insights, emerging trends, and shifting priorities.

Data & Methodology

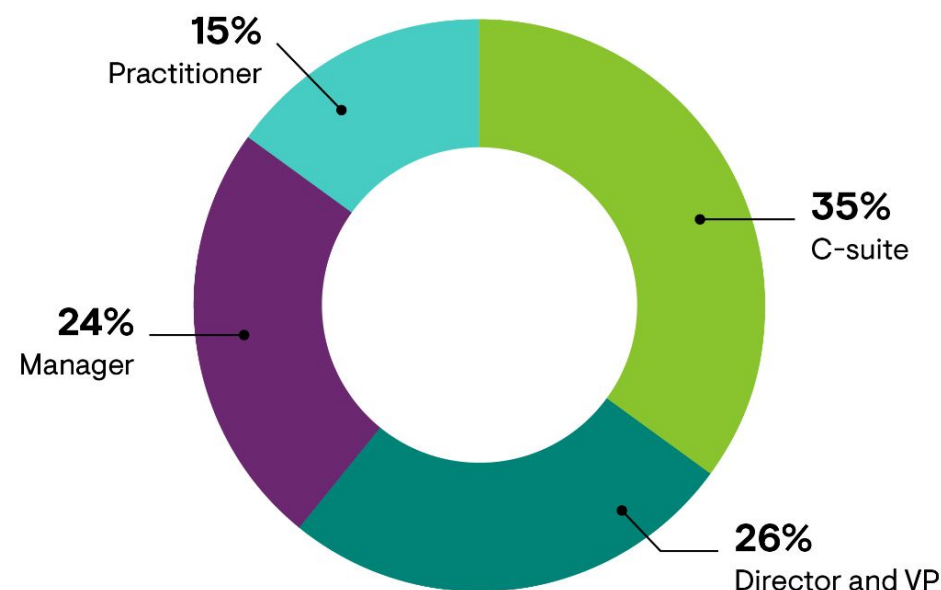
The State of SEO Survey

To learn more about the current state of SEO and the latest trends, disruptions, and priorities for the future of search in 2025, we surveyed **350 digital marketing, SEO, and content marketing experts** in North America who serve a primary role in managing a brand's website or digital presence.

Respondents were sourced from B2B and B2C companies ranging in size from small (1-149 employees) to mid-market (150 to 999 employees) and enterprise (1,000+ employees).

Our data represents the perspectives of various digital stakeholders across all role levels, including practitioners (think analysts, strategists, and specialists), managers, directors, and above.

Survey Data: Role Level Breakdown

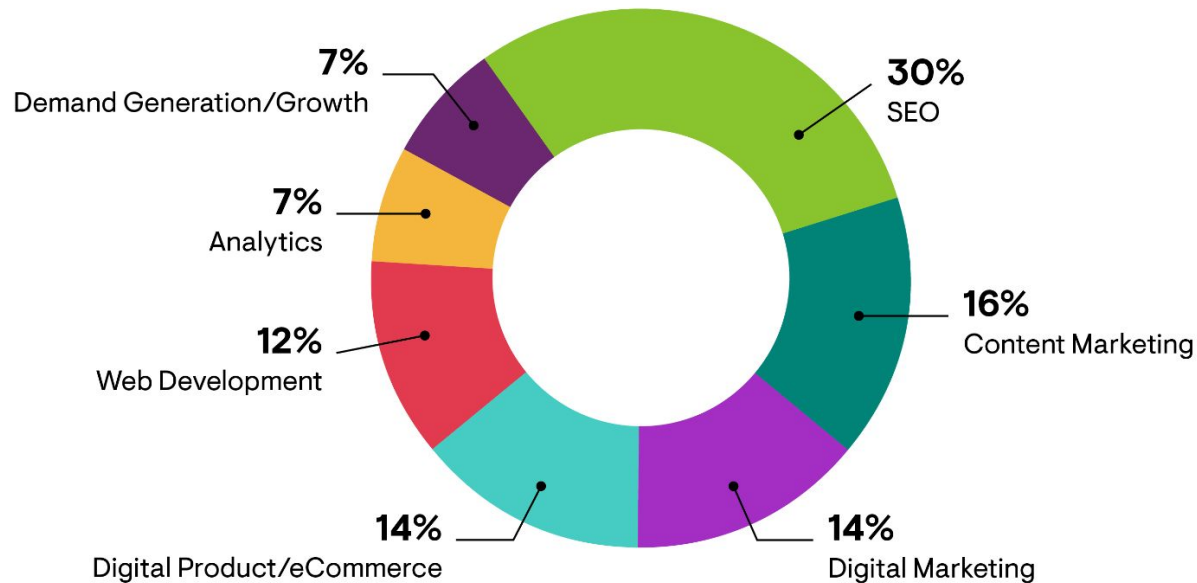


The State of SEO Survey

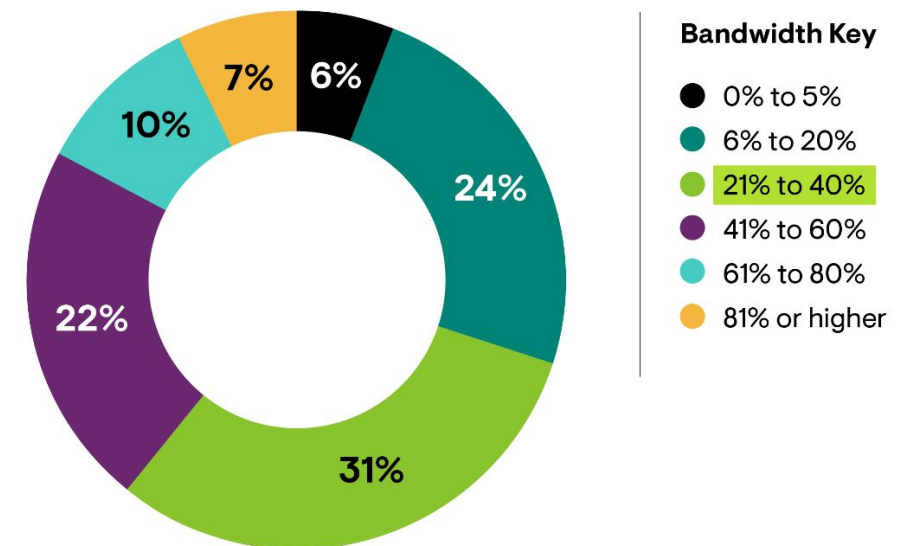
To ensure the accuracy of our data and takeaways, all survey respondents serve a primary job function related to managing a brand's website or digital presence and dedicate a portion of their overall bandwidth to SEO.

On average, **most respondents (31%) reported spending 21% to 40% of overall bandwidth on SEO efforts** over the last 12 months.

Survey Data: Job Function Breakdown



Survey Data: Overall Bandwidth Dedicated to SEO

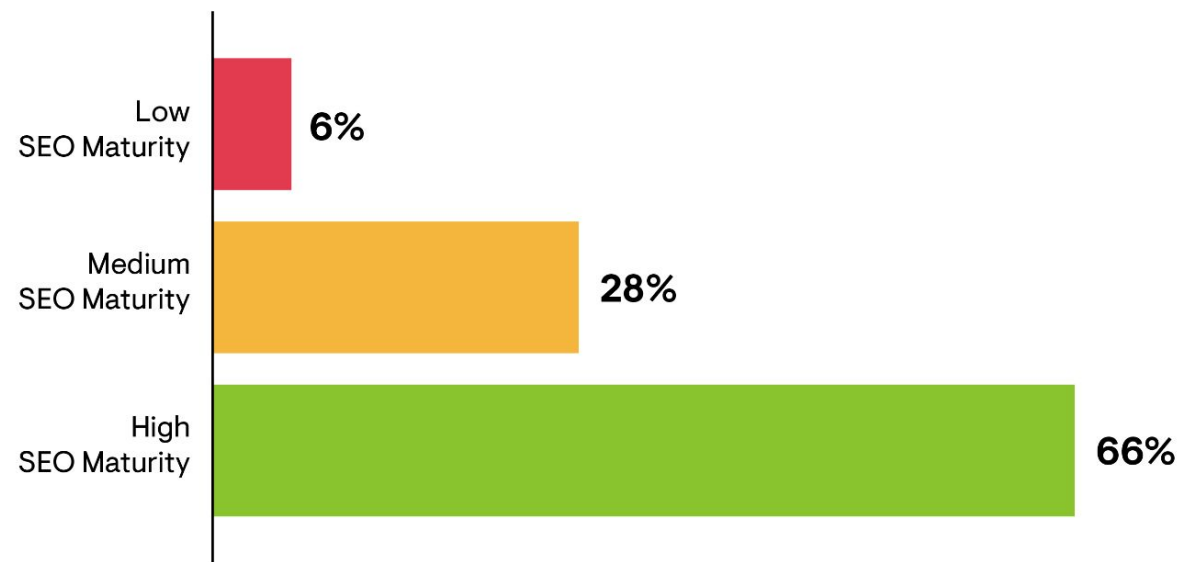


The State of SEO Survey

Throughout the report, we used the concept of SEO maturity to further segment the data. Below is a brief overview of the three levels respondents could choose from to determine their SEO maturity:

- **Low SEO Maturity:** Organizations where SEO is not that important yet. There are currently minimal resources or investments in SEO.
- **Medium SEO Maturity:** Organizations where SEO is moderately important with adequate SEO resources and investment.
- **High SEO Maturity:** Organizations where SEO is a priority. SEO is a significant part of the processes for more than one team with strong investment.

Survey Data: SEO Maturity Breakdown

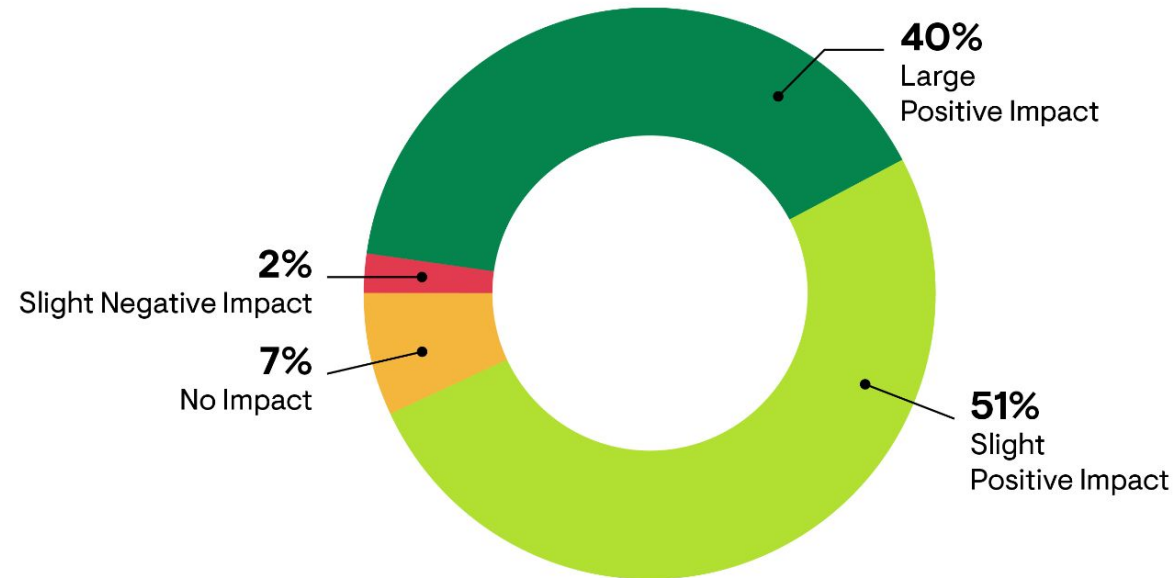


SEO in 2024

The Current State

The Impact of SEO on Website Performance and Marketing Goals

Overall



91%

reported that **SEO positively impacted** website performance and marketing goals in 2024.

The Impact of SEO on Website Performance and Marketing Goals

By Function

- Demand generation/growth marketers are **2x as likely to report that SEO had no impact** on performance than all other job functions.
- Demand generation/growth marketers are **3x more likely to report that SEO had a slight negative impact** on performance than all other job functions.

Why?

It's likely this team is more often siloed from regular SEO reporting or is focused on metrics that don't show the full impact of SEO on performance.

- Demand generation/growth marketers were also the only job function to report “ad hoc and inconsistent” as the top response for their organization's SEO reporting approach.

This limited view reinforces the value of a cross-functional SEO platform that every digital team can leverage to understand the impact of SEO and use those insights to fuel growth.

Takeaways from the Experts

On The Impact of SEO on Website Performance and Marketing Goals *by Function*



“ I think these stats from demand gen/growth marketers showcase the disconnect that still exists between SEO and other functions within **organizations**. How could SEO have zero impact when organic traffic sends nearly 40% of all site traffic on average?

Stats like this tell me that SEO is likely not a primary focus area for these organizations, **which is a real shame because they're leaving money on the table, not to mention how much search data can help demand gen teams.**

It also showcases that a big job for an SEO professional is to teach and evangelize the practice.”

 **Pat Reinhart,**

VP of Services & Thought Leadership at Conductor

The Impact of SEO on Website Performance and Marketing Goals

By SEO Maturity Level

97%

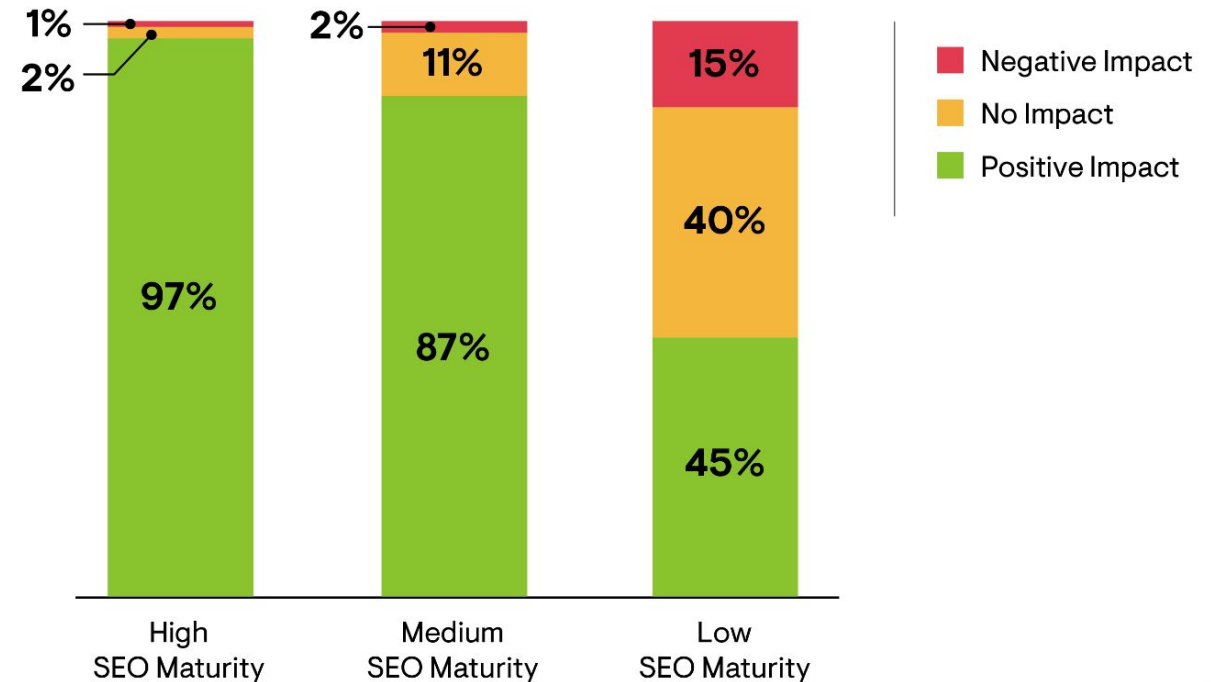
of organizations with high SEO maturity reported that SEO positively impacted performance and goals.

Organizations at the **lowest SEO maturity level** are much more likely to report SEO as having no impact or a negative impact.

Why?

On average, organizations at the highest SEO maturity level:

- **Prioritized hiring** highly skilled SEO talent rather than outsourcing SEO to an agency or freelancer
- Are **4x more likely** to use a fully integrated enterprise SEO platform
- Measure and report on **3x as many SEO metrics** compared to organizations with low SEO maturity



Top 3 SEO Priorities in 2024

By Role Level

Increasing brand awareness remained the top priority overall for 2024, like we saw in 2023.

Practitioners and managers are primarily focused on tactical objectives, like improving collaboration and mitigating bandwidth limitations.

- Interestingly, **improving SEO collaboration** was ranked a top priority by the **web dev and analytics job functions** exclusively. Likely because they rely on collaboration to take action, unlike SEOs or content marketers.
- Managers could be more aware of this disconnect and are prioritizing improved collaboration as a result.

Leaders are more focused on the latest trends and how to leverage these innovations to fuel growth.

Practitioners	Managers	Leaders
1. Increasing brand awareness	1. Increasing brand awareness	1. Increasing brand awareness
2. Managing SEO bandwidth limitations	2. Improving SEO collab across teams and departments	2. Increasing efficiency through new SEO automation tech (e.g., AI)
3. Improving UX	3. Identifying how to adapt SEO strategy and optimize for Google's AIO, Perplexity.ai, SearchGPT, etc.	3. Identifying how to adapt SEO strategy and optimize for Google's AIO, Perplexity.ai, SearchGPT, etc.


Takeaways from the Experts

On Top 2024 SEO Priorities *by Role Level*



“There’s always been this narrative from people who work in SEO that engaging other teams, especially more technical ones like web dev & analytics, is a losing battle. It’s very encouraging that we’re seeing the data show us **these are exactly the teams who are willing and actually want to improve collaboration with SEO functions.**

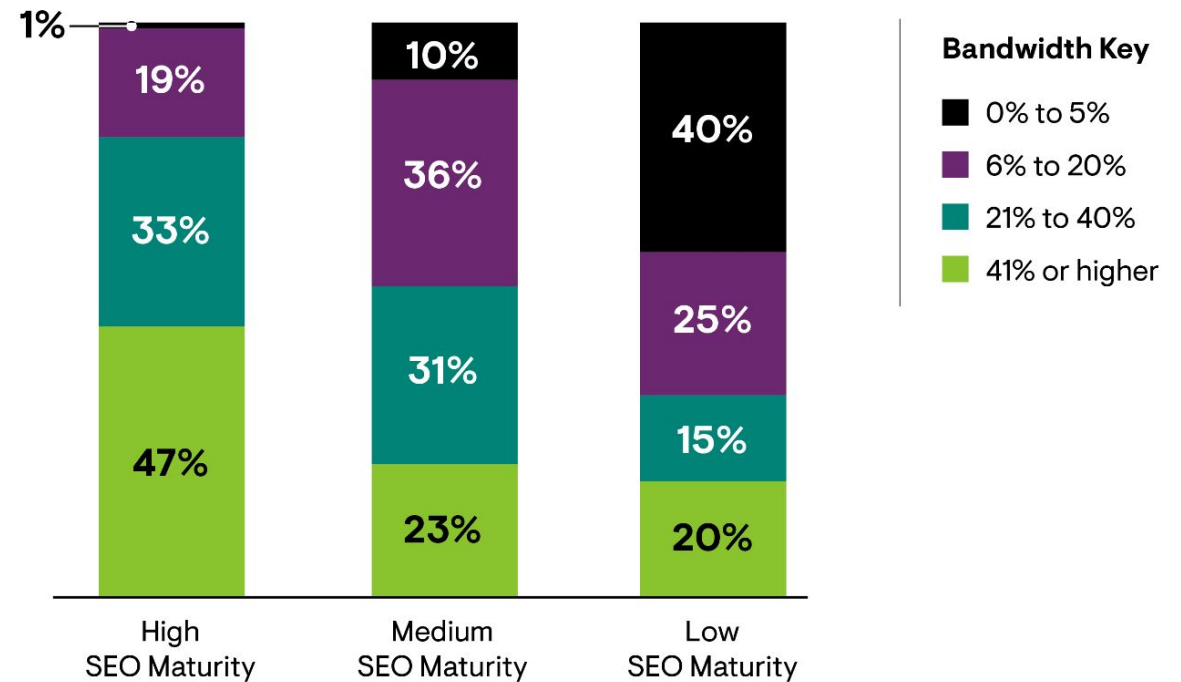
If intentions turn to actions in 2025, this could be a year of real progress in the world of website optimization and performance.”

 **Spencer Stein,**
Senior Enterprise Account Manager at Conductor

Average Bandwidth Dedicated to SEO in 2024

By SEO Maturity Level

The majority of organizations with **high SEO maturity** dedicated around **25% more bandwidth to SEO efforts** than those with medium or low maturity.



The Most Significant SEO Challenges in 2024

Overall

At the start of 2024, all eyes were on Google's impending rollout of AIO (formerly known as SGE) to all users, so it's no surprise that **adapting to AI advancements** was ranked as the most significant SEO challenge overall.

SEOs and marketers braced for the worst in 2024 as major publications were predicting the end of search and SEO following the full launch of AIO.

- 1 Adapting to AI advancements**
(Generative AI, AIO, etc.)
- 2 Navigating Google algorithm updates**
- 3 Historical SEO neglect**
- 4 Internal roadblocks to securing buy-in and/or lack of resources**
- 5 SEO governance**


Takeaways from the Experts

On The Most Significant SEO Challenges in 2024 | Overall



“**‘Adapt’ is the key word here.** SEOs who took on the challenge of AI-driven changes as an opportunity were successful in 2024 and will continue to be in 2025.

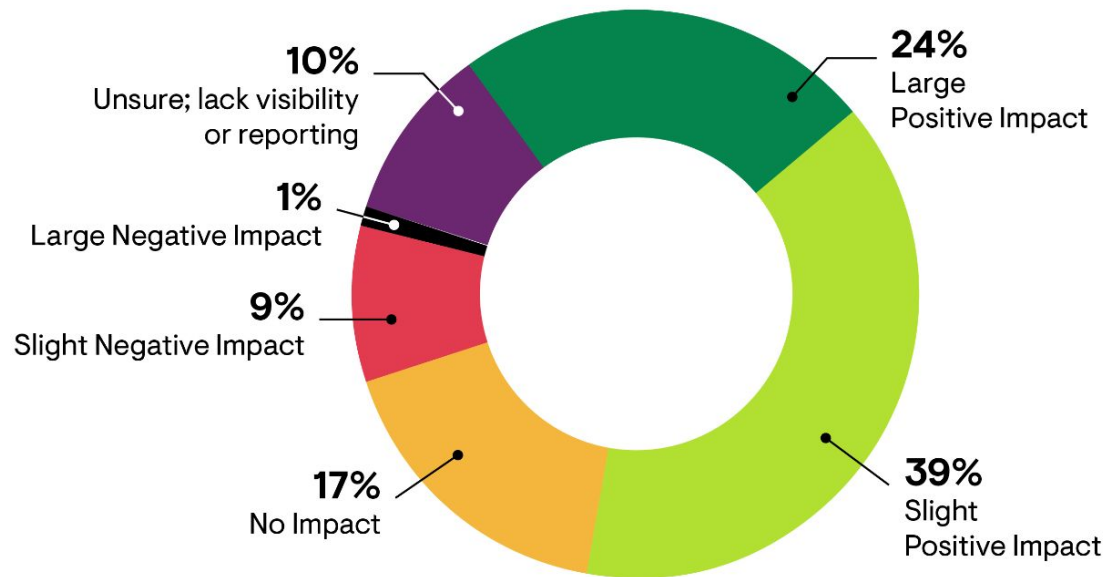
AI won’t replace SEOs, but **SEOs who don’t adapt with AI will be left behind.**”

 **Nick Gallagher,**
Sr. SEO Strategy Director at Conductor

The Evolving Role of AI in SEO

The Impact of Google's AIO on Traffic, Visibility, & Rankings in 2024

Overall



63%

of respondents reported **AIO positively impacted organic traffic, visibility, or rankings** since rollout.

Early signs indicate that Google's AIO isn't having the doomsday impact that some experts predicted.

Takeaways from the Experts

On The Impact of Google's AIO on Traffic, Visibility, & Rankings in 2024 | Overall



“ This is an encouraging stat, and I've been saying that **folks have to stop thinking that something bad is happening and start thinking that something different is happening.**

Not all change is bad, and I believe that AIOs are actually a good experience and will help surface more sites and content and create more opportunity.

Change is always painful at first, but **folks have to stand up and ride the wave, or they are going to get swept underneath it.**”

 **Pat Reinhart,**

VP of Services & Thought Leadership at Conductor

The Impact of Google's AIO on Traffic, Visibility, & Rankings in 2024

By Function

Most respondents with SEO, digital marketing, web development, demand generation/growth, analytics, and digital product/eCommerce as their primary job functions **reported Google's AIO had a positive impact in 2024.**

The one group still on the fence: **Content marketers.**

40%

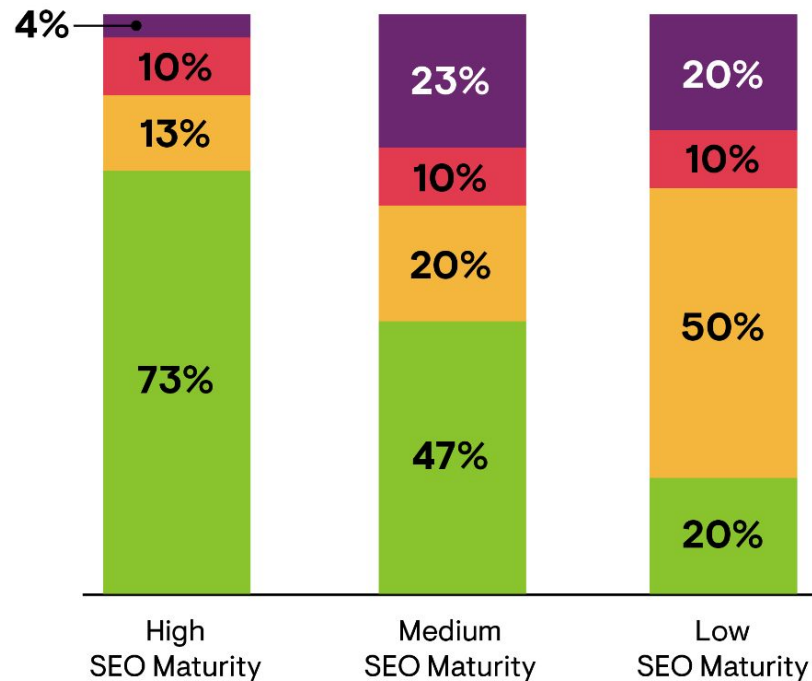
of SEOs reported a large positive impact, **compared to just 2% of content marketers.**

Why?





- SEOs have researched AIO more and likely have a better understanding of what it means for the business.
- Content marketers could be unsure of how AIO impacts their content performance due to a lack of visibility or effective reporting.

The Impact of Google's AIO on Traffic, Visibility, & Rankings in 2024

By SEO Maturity



- Organizations with low or medium SEO maturity are **5x more likely to lack the visibility or reporting on AIO impact** than those with high SEO maturity.
- Organizations with high SEO maturity are more than **3x as likely** to report a positive impact compared to those with low SEO maturity.

 Positive Impact  No Impact  Negative Impact
 Unsure; lack visibility or reporting

Takeaways from the Experts

On The Impact of Google's AIO on Traffic, Visibility, & Rankings in 2024 *by SEO Maturity*



“Unsurprisingly, brands with high SEO maturity anticipate benefits from AIO, as their maturity is naturally intertwined with resource availability to drive their programs forward.

In contrast, 50% of organizations with low SEO maturity report no anticipated impact from AIO, likely due to a lack of visibility through reporting. **This lack of reporting limits their optimism for a changing SERP and their ability to see AIO as an opportunity.**”

 **Bianca Siegel,**
SEO Consultant at Conductor

Top SEO Priorities Related to AIO

Overall

In last year's State of SEO Report, we asked respondents to rank their top 2023 SEO priorities related to AIO (formerly SGE).

Twelve months later, those priorities have shifted significantly.

Now, digital marketers better recognize the value of continuous learning and adaptation when it comes to AIO and AI in search overall.

UX enhancement remains a top priority, while organizations rely more on learning from competitors' efforts to inform their AIO strategies.

2023 Priorities	2024 Priorities
1. UX enhancement	1. Continuous learning & adaptation
2. Long-tail keyword targeting	2. UX enhancement
3. Schema markup enhancement	3. Competitive analysis


Takeaways from the Experts

On The Top SEO Priorities Related to AIO | Overall



“AIO is consistently growing and **appearing more frequently for keywords with informational or mixed intent phrases.**

In 2025, to help drive more conversions to your site, **focus on targeting more transactional or longer tail keywords that align with the user.** This way you can ensure you're bringing qualified traffic to your site for users who are interested in what you have to offer.”

 **Zack Kadish,**
Sr. SEO Strategy Director at Conductor

Top SEO Priorities Related to AIO

By SEO Maturity Level

Organizations with high SEO maturity were **the only group to omit AIO-specific competitive analysis** from their AIO priorities.

Organizations with high SEO maturity have the investments, technology, and expertise needed to experiment with and successfully leverage AIO through innovative strategies. While they prioritize traditional competitive research ([see here](#)), AIO-specific competitive research is not a priority within their AIO SEO efforts.

Those at the medium or low SEO maturity level are forced into a more reactive strategy by relying on competitive analysis to learn what works. This delay could cost them traffic, rankings, and revenue.

High SEO Maturity	Medium SEO Maturity	Low SEO Maturity
1. Continuous learning & adaptation	1. Schema markup enhancement	1. UX enhancement
2. Content optimization UX enhancement	2. Competitive analysis	2. Competitive analysis
3. Schema markup enhancement	3. Monitoring SERP changes	3. Image, visual, & rich media enhancement

Takeaways from the Experts

On The Top SEO Priorities Related to AIO by SEO Maturity Level



“These statistics reinforce that **organizations with high SEO maturity will continue to stay two steps ahead of those with lower maturity levels.**

Optimizing for AIO isn't fundamentally different from what SEOs have traditionally been doing to optimize for Google.

High-maturity organizations have already invested the necessary resources and budgets to stay ahead of the curve before AIO. This positions them to focus now on strategic initiatives and proactive thinking, setting them apart once again.”

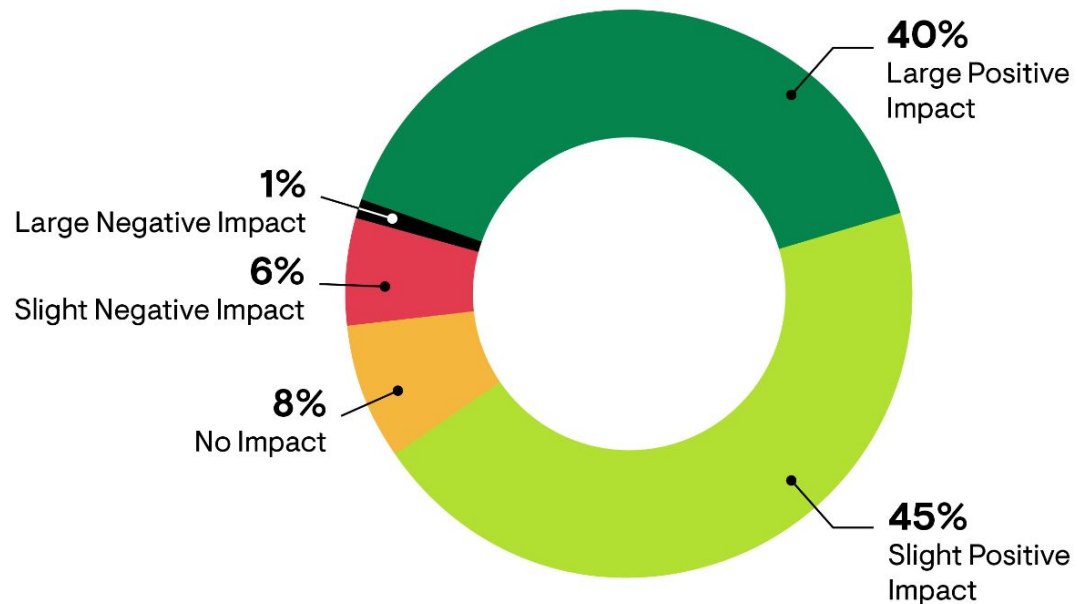


Mary Palumbo,

Director, SEO Analysts & Marketplace at Conductor

Anticipated Impact of AI on SEO in 2025

Overall



85% of respondents predicted AI will **positively impact SEO** in 2025.

Digital marketers are hopeful about AI's anticipated impact on SEO in 2025 following the overall positive impact of Google's AIO rollout in 2024.

Anticipated Impact of AI on SEO in 2025

By Function

Content marketers are **2-3x more likely** than any other job function to anticipate a negative impact of AI on SEO in 2025.

This aligns with content marketers being the outlier within job functions on the impact of AIO on performance in 2024.

More than any other function, content marketers seem the most skeptical about the future impact of AI on SEO.

Pro Tip:

- Collaboration is the key to continued success on SERPs in an AI-driven search landscape.
- Getting content marketers up to speed on how to optimize content for new AI result types and search engines, along with providing regular content performance reporting related to SEO, can help overcome this disconnect between teams.


Takeaways from the Experts

On The Top SEO Priorities Related to AIO by SEO Maturity Level



“Content marketers are more likely to anticipate a negative impact of AI on SEO because they have experienced how SEO platforms can lead to a glut of similar, mediocre content—often called ‘copycat content.’ Now, generative AI tools are automating the creation of this type of content.

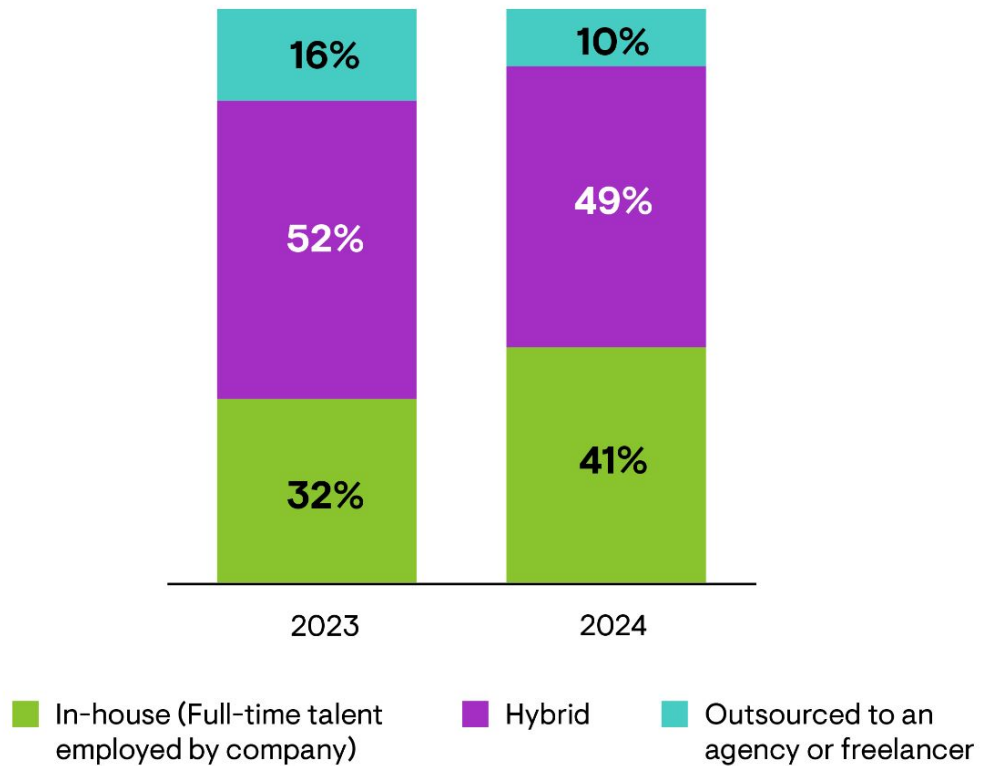
AI will always be able to outproduce humans. So **don’t try to compete with AI on quantity**; instead, focus on quality. Content marketers need to strengthen their “content moat” by incorporating first-party data, expert insights, and real experiences. **Create content that AI can’t replicate.”**

 **Steven van Vessum,**
Director of Organic Marketing at Conductor

SEO Resourcing & Processes

In-House vs. Outsourced SEO Resourcing Strategy

Overall



Compared to our previous State of SEO survey results, organizations **reporting an in-house strategy increased 9% year-over-year.**

Why?

Implementing an in-house SEO resourcing strategy allows companies to play a more active role in developing and executing SEO strategies. An in-house SEO strategy could also enable faster adaptation to future AI-related disruptions in search.

SEO Structure

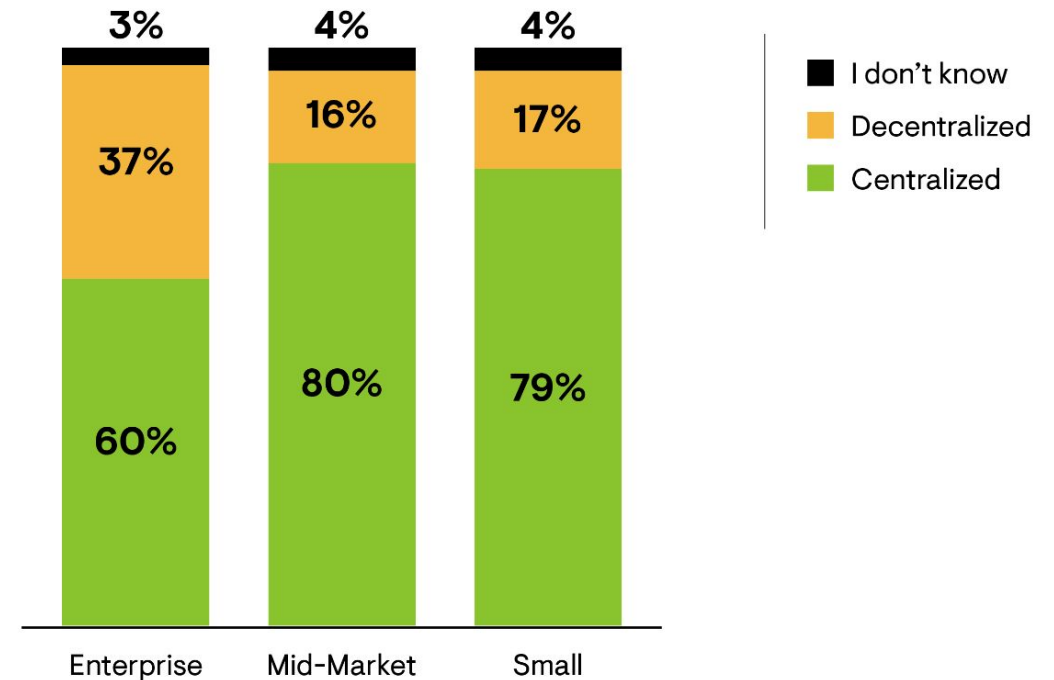
By Company Size

Enterprise organizations were **2x as likely to report a decentralized SEO structure** than small or mid-market organizations.

Why?

Enterprise organizations often struggle with a specific set of SEO challenges related to the size and scope of their business.

Larger organizations tend to have country, region, or brand-specific digital teams, which can lead to a decentralized SEO governance approach where these teams operate in silos. This can negatively impact search performance and lead to cannibalization.



Definitions:

- **Decentralized** = SEO governance distributed across multiple teams, departments, countries, or brands; often functions as SEO silos
- **Centralized** = SEO governance is owned by one department or team to ensure quality, and that best practices are followed

Takeaways from the Experts

On SEO Structure *by Company Size*



“**SEO is a holistic endeavor.** A centrally structured SEO team is well-placed to enable an organization to make growth-driven decisions.

In highly competitive markets, ‘best practice SEO’ is the lowest common denominator among competitors. **Teams with a centrally structured SEO function have the greatest chance to pull ahead and drive impactful changes toward growth.”**

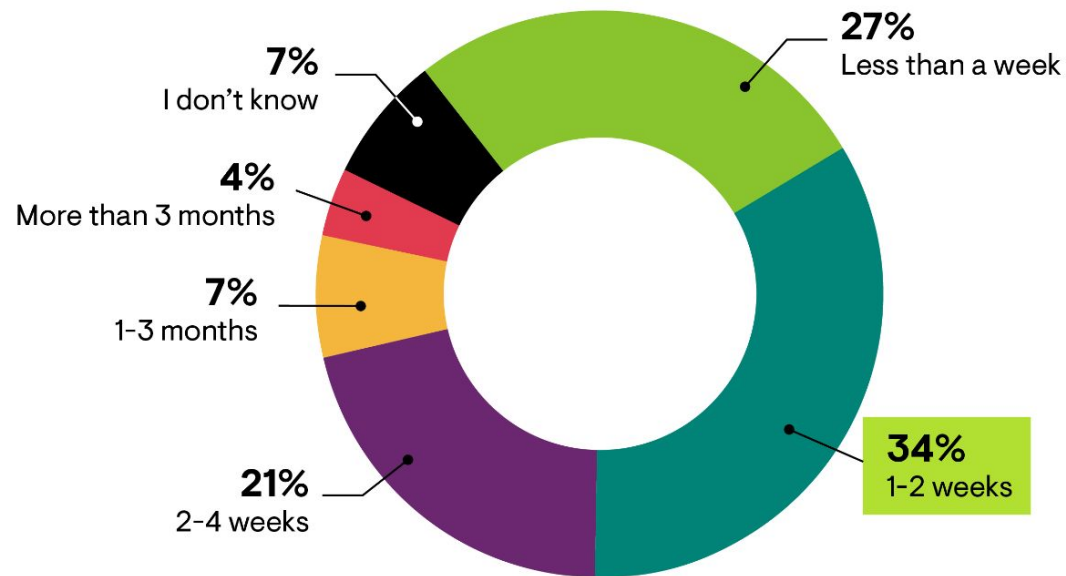


Bryan Grossbauch,

Data Services Lead at Conductor

Average Time to Implementation for SEO Requests

Overall



- 61% reported that it takes **less than 2 weeks** for the web development or IT teams to fulfill an SEO request.
- However, organizations with **medium to high SEO maturity** are **2x as likely** to have **SEO tasks completed within 2 weeks** than those with low SEO maturity.

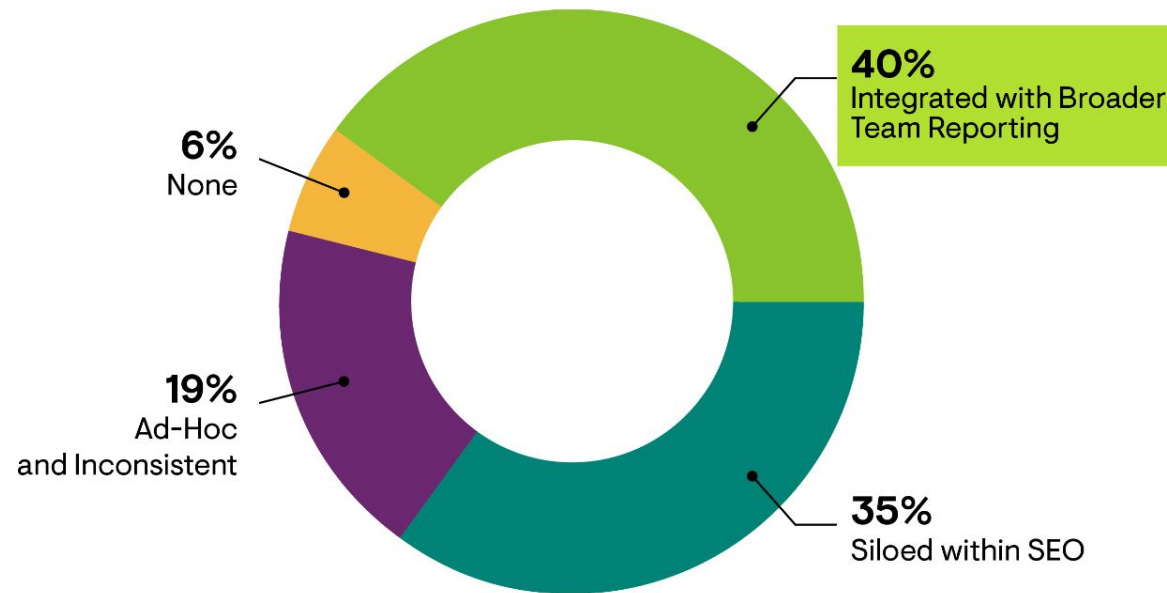
These results reiterate that speed is everything when it comes to SEO. **On average, SEO issues go unnoticed for at least 4 weeks and cost up to \$75K in lost revenue.**

Organizations with high SEO maturity recognize how much they have to lose by moving too slowly, which is why increasing the time to implementation for SEO requests is one of their top SEO priorities for 2025.

SEO Reporting

SEO Reporting Approach

Overall



- 60% of respondents reported a siloed, ad-hoc and inconsistent, or lack of regular SEO reporting.
- Unsurprisingly, organizations with **high SEO maturity** were **4x more likely to report a comprehensive, team-based SEO reporting approach** than those with medium or low maturity.

Most Common SEO Reporting Metrics

Overall

Rank	Most Common SEO Reporting Metrics
1	User engagement metrics (<i>time spent on page, interaction with content, etc.</i>)
2	Organic traffic (<i>sessions/visits</i>)
3	Keyword rankings
4	Revenue
5	Website health
6	Conversion rate
7	Local SEO (<i>local pack rankings, Google My Business engagement, online reviews, etc.</i>)
8	Organic impressions

User engagement, organic website traffic, and keyword rankings are the three most commonly tracked SEO metrics.

Website traffic and engagement are the two most fundamental metrics for SEO reporting. To elevate reporting and provide more accuracy, measure SEO efforts against key business objectives, like lead influence and revenue generation.

Our [SEO Reporting Template](#) is a great place to start building that framework.

Average Number of Metrics Used for SEO Reporting

By SEO Maturity Level

- Low SEO Maturity = 3 Metrics
- Medium SEO Maturity = 5 Metrics
- High SEO Maturity = 9 Metrics

Organizations with high SEO maturity report on a higher combination of complex SEO metrics, including lead influence, local SEO, conversion rates, impressions, revenue generation, and Core Web Vitals, to get the most comprehensive and accurate look at the ROI of SEO efforts.

As search continues to evolve with AI, reporting on a higher number of SEO metrics will become even more critical to capture the complete picture of performance.

Low SEO Maturity	High SEO Maturity
1. Revenue	1. Keyword rankings
2. Organic traffic	2. User engagement metrics
3. User engagement metrics	3. Conversion rate
	4. Local SEO
	5. Organic traffic
	6. Revenue
	7. Website health
	8. SQLs/MQLs/Leads/Transactions
	9. Organic impressions

Medium SEO Maturity
1. User engagement metrics
2. Organic traffic
3. Website health
4. Revenue
5. Keyword rankings


Takeaways from the Experts

On The Average Number of Metrics Used for SEO Reporting *by SEO Maturity Level*



“ In my experience, **sophisticated reporting and segmentation are essential for tackling the growing complexity of metrics saturation.**

A deep understanding of the KPI stack and its value within an organization enables effective prioritization. Proper prioritization, in turn, is key to making impactful business decisions.”

 **Bryan Grossbauch,**
Data Services Lead at Conductor

SEO Competitor Analysis

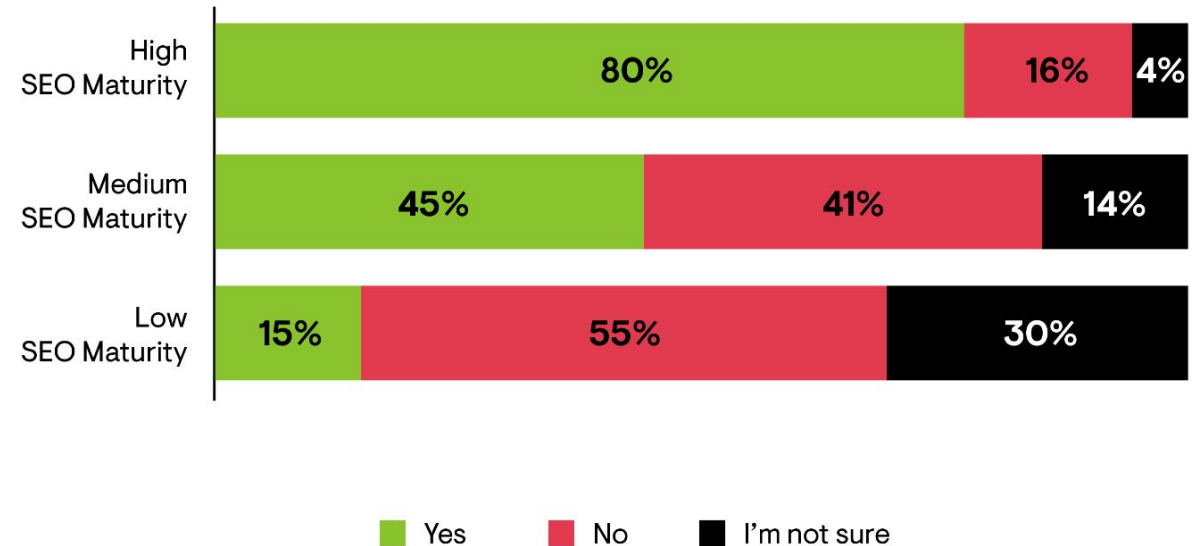
By SEO Maturity Level

Organizations with **high SEO maturity** are:

- Nearly **2x as likely** to run traditional competitor analysis compared to those with medium SEO maturity
- **5x as likely** as those with low SEO maturity

Traditional competitor research remains an effective strategy for identifying content gaps, opportunities, and threats, which is why most organizations with medium and high SEO maturity run regular analyses.

Does your company run regular SEO competitor analysis?



Takeaways from the Experts

On SEO Competitor Analysis by *SEO Maturity Level*



“There’s an interesting misconception that competitor research takes too long, and generally, low maturity teams wear multiple hats and feel that they lack time to do it.

However, **competitor research** is not only hugely important, but it **can also save you time by helping you identify and prioritize opportunities, content creation, and content optimization.**”



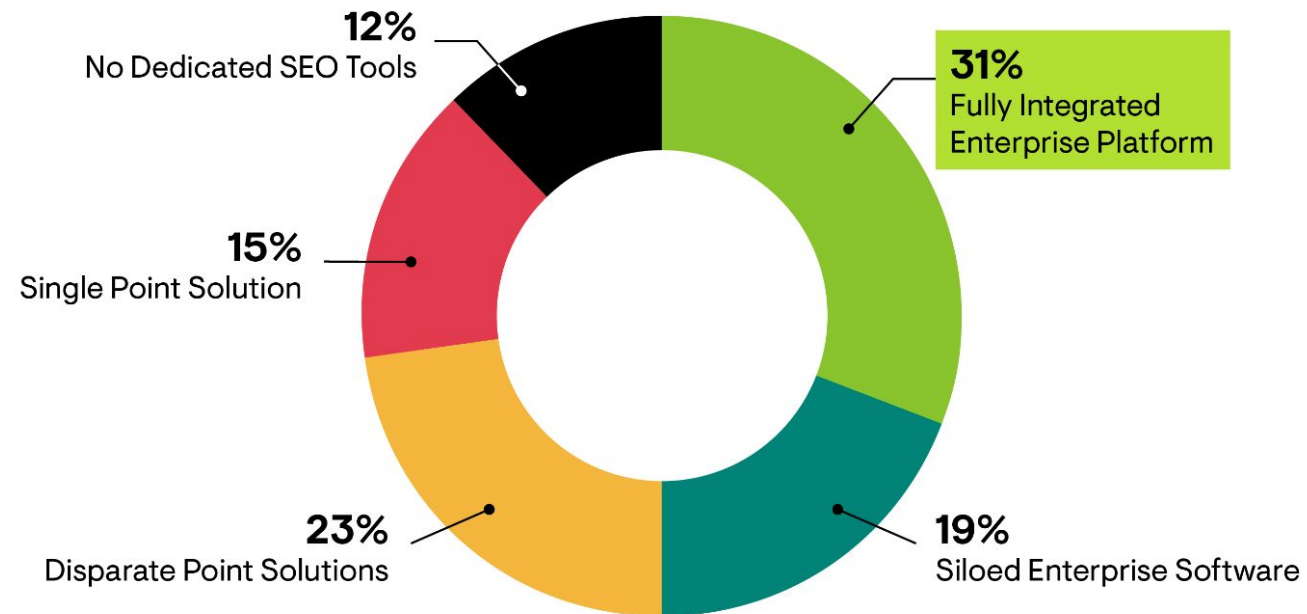
Rachel Schardt,

Customer Success Team Lead at Conductor

SEO Technology

SEO Technology Type

Overall

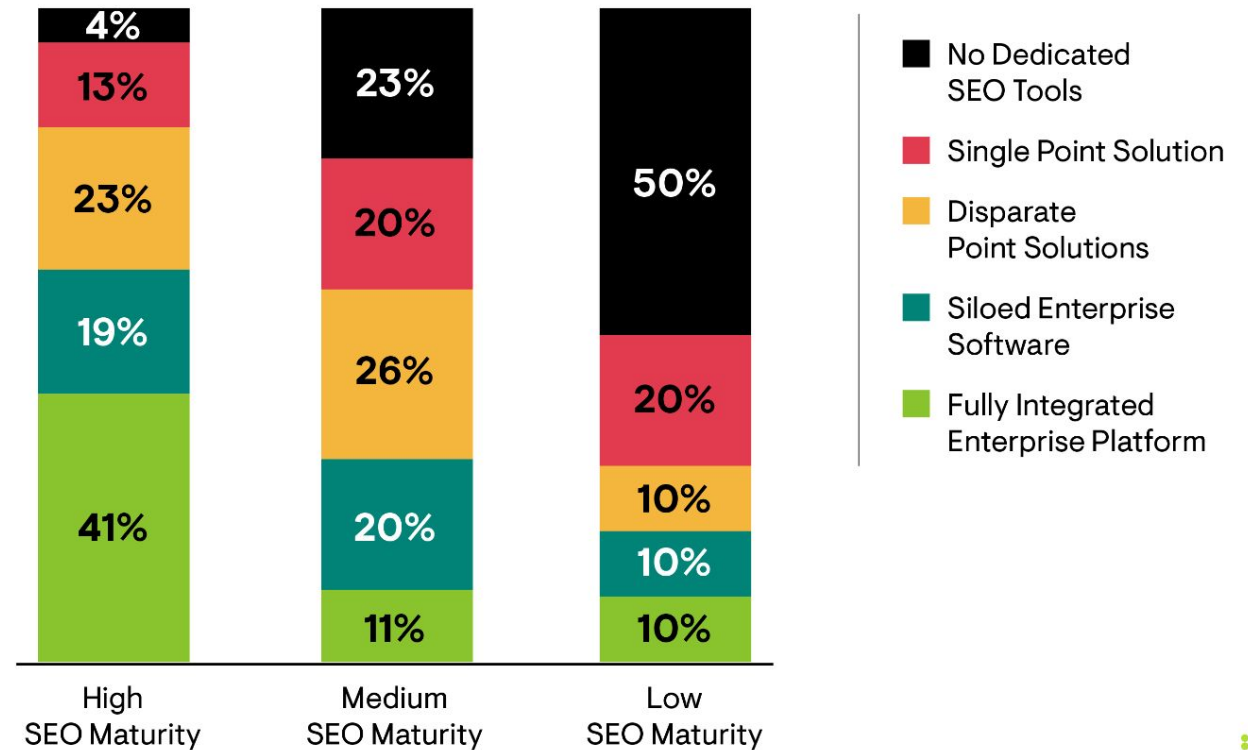


A majority of respondents use a **fully integrated enterprise SEO platform** to achieve success with their SEO efforts.

SEO Technology Type

By SEO Maturity Level

- A majority of organizations with **low SEO maturity** use **no SEO tools**.
- A majority of organizations with **medium SEO maturity** use **disparate point solutions**.
- A majority of organizations with **high SEO maturity** use a **fully integrated SEO enterprise platform**.



SEO Priorities for 2025

Top SEO Priorities for 2025

By Role Level

Practitioners	Managers	Leaders
1. Adapting to the impact of AI on SEO	1. Adapting to the impact of AI on SEO	1. Increasing rate of implementing SEO improvements
2. Evaluating new SEO technologies and tools for investment	2. Being able to measure the performance of SEO efforts	2. Adapting to the impact of AI on SEO
3. Building more effective collaboration and workflows between SEO and other teams	3. Adjusting to algorithm changes from search engines	3. Being able to measure the performance of SEO efforts

Adapting to the impact of AI on SEO is a **top priority for all role levels** for 2025.

While digital managers and leaders aligned on two of their top three priorities, leaders ranked increasing speed—or time to implementation—as their #1 SEO priority for 2025.

Top SEO Priorities for 2025

By SEO Maturity Level

Improving reporting on SEO performance is a **top priority for all SEO maturity levels** for 2025.

Although all three levels ranked SEO reporting as a top priority, the reasoning behind this likely differs.

Low and medium SEO maturity organizations need to build out more comprehensive reporting efforts to prove the impact of SEO to decision-makers.

High SEO maturity organizations are likely more concerned about the potential impact of AIO and AI in search on their current reporting and measurement efforts, so they are looking to solve that before it becomes a larger issue.

High SEO Maturity	Medium SEO Maturity	Low SEO Maturity
1. Adapting to the impact of AI on SEO	1. Being able to measure the performance of SEO efforts	1. Being able to measure the performance of SEO efforts
2. Being able to measure the performance of SEO efforts	2. Adapting to the impact of AI on SEO	2. Adjusting to algorithm changes from search engines
3. Increasing rate of implementing SEO improvements	3. Evaluating new SEO technologies and tools for investment	3. Getting buy-in and alignment around SEO investment



Summary

Search is changing, but the future remains bright, as **85% of surveyed respondents predict AI will positively impact SEO in 2025.**

Cross-functional collaboration across all digital teams, comprehensive reporting, essential technology investments, and agile adaptability are the strategic SEO considerations that will separate organizations that succeed from those that don't.

Try Conductor for free

Start your 30-day free trial of Conductor Intelligence to evaluate your current search performance and identify opportunities for SEO success in 2025.