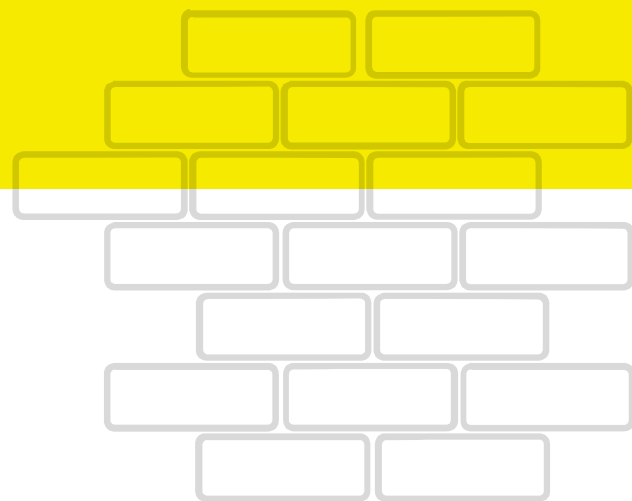


CONSTRUCTION SEO

KEY INSIGHTS FROM
AUDITING THE WEBSITES
OF EVERY *ENR*
TOP 400 CONTRACTOR

by **alt.cmo**

A construction-focused fractional
CMO marketing firm.





do the biggest construction companies care about seo?

We're construction marketers who often hear from construction executives that SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and digital marketing are unnecessary. We know this isn't true, and **many construction companies are quietly thriving by fully utilizing their websites.**

We wondered—do the industry's biggest players in the Construction industry prioritize their online presence? To find out, we analyzed the website of every company on *ENR's* 2024 Top 400 Contractors list.

400



methodology

The AltCMO team collaborated to establish a fair and efficient approach for evaluating 400 construction company websites. Our objective was to assess key SEO performance indicators without bias. To achieve this, we focused on domain authority, backlinks, spam score, AI presence, and page speed. These metrics provided both average and median scores for each category, creating reliable industry benchmarks. Additionally, we identified companies that performed exceptionally well and those facing SEO challenges.

We used various SEO tools to collect quantitative data, including Moz and Google Page Speed. Our analysis did not involve qualitative

assessments, access to website backends, or the use of Google Analytics data. Furthermore, we did not engage in any form of white, gray, or black hat SEO tactics. All data referenced in this report is publicly available. Although the data collection process spanned several weeks, **each tool performed a comprehensive analysis of all 400 websites within a single day.** This ensured consistency and fairness in the evaluation, as website data can fluctuate frequently.

The only application of AI during this process was for validating website addresses and confirming whether the companies were discoverable by ChatGPT. AI was not used to manipulate or analyze website performance directly.

domain authority

One key SEO metric is Domain Authority (DA), a widely recognized scoring system developed by Moz that predicts how well a website will likely rank on search engine results pages. Domain Authority scores range from 1 to 100, with higher numbers indicating a stronger likelihood of ranking well. A score over 30 is typically considered good for professional services companies like in Construction.

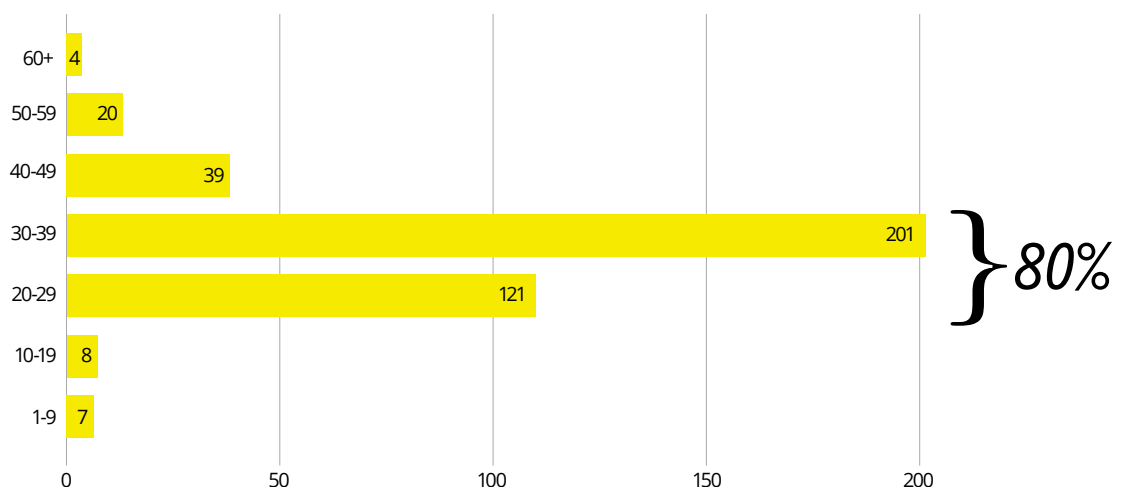
Our research revealed that 66% of ENR 400 contractors have a DA score above 30, while another 30% fall between 20 and 29. While a high-ranking website doesn't guarantee business success, fewer than 3% of top contractors scored below 20, reinforcing that a strong digital presence is a key component of industry leadership.

Average	33
Lowest	1
Highest	71

Among the top 50 contractors on ENR's list, only one scored below 30, and even then, it was just shy at 27. Expanding the scope to the top 100 contractors, only 9 companies fell below this threshold, reinforcing the trend that leading firms recognize the value of a strong digital presence.

The highest-ranking websites in our analysis belonged to some of the industry's biggest names. AECOM led the pack with an impressive DA score of 71, securing the 14th spot on ENR's list. Close behind was Ferrovial Construction US Holdings Corp., with a DA of 64 (ranked 61st), followed by Bechtel at 61 (3rd on ENR's list) and Skanska USA at 60 (12th on ENR's list).

These numbers highlight a clear connection between top industry players and strong digital authority, proving that SEO and digital marketing are important to our country's biggest contractors. While these companies are known for being government contractors, SEO isn't just valuable for gaining new work; it also helps attract top talent.





evaluating website speed

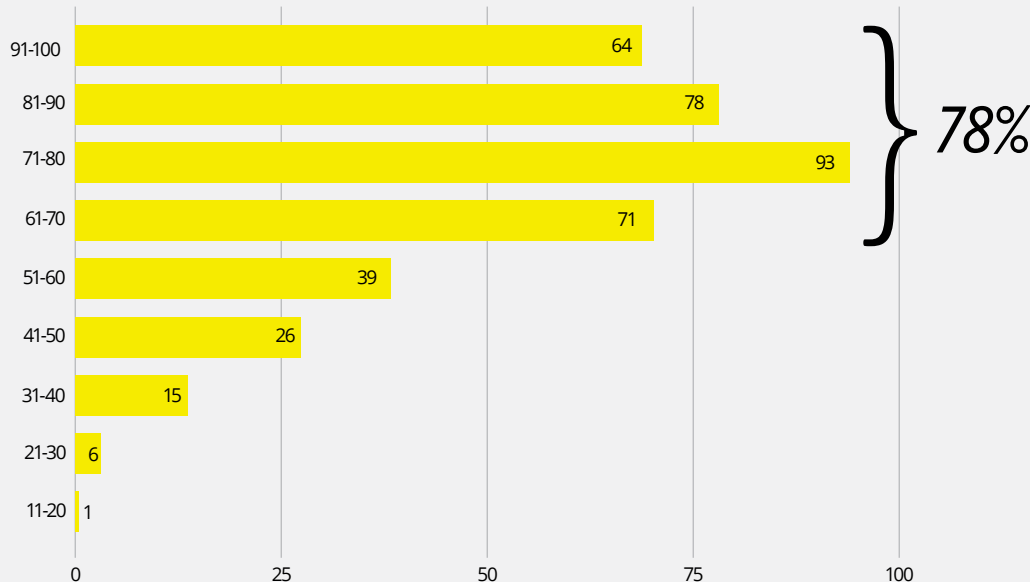
Page speed is a critical factor influencing your website's search ranking because how quickly your site loads directly impacts user experience and, consequently, your search engine performance. We've all felt the frustration of waiting for a sluggish website to load. Often, when a site doesn't load quickly, we abandon it. Search engines track this behavior, prioritizing the searcher's experience over the authority of the content alone.

Search engines aim to deliver the most relevant, authoritative content as efficiently as possible. **If a search engine consistently directs users to slow-loading sites, it risks losing users to competitors** like Bing or AI-powered alternatives. This fierce competition makes page speed essential for maintaining visibility in search results. (We'll dive deeper into AI's impact on search trends later.)

Our analysis of the Top 400 U.S. contractors' websites revealed a significant range in page speed performance. Scores spanned from a sluggish 18 to a flawless 100. Impressively, eight companies achieved a perfect 100 desktop speed. On average, the desktop speed score was 73; a solid performance that speaks to the resources and expertise these larger construction companies can leverage.

Average	73
Lowest	18
Highest	100

desktop page speeds



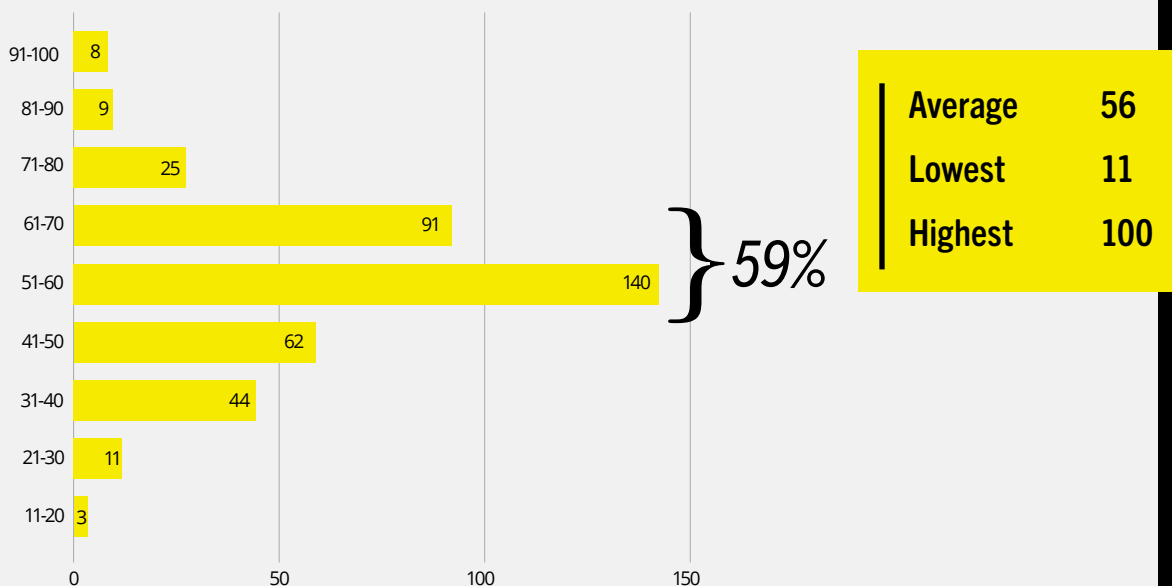
evaluating website speed [cont.]

However, desktop speed isn't the only concern for SEO. Nearly half of all searches originate on mobile devices, so mobile site speed is crucial. When we evaluated mobile speeds across these 400 websites, only five contractors achieved a perfect 100 mobile speed score. Surprisingly, the average mobile speed score dropped sharply to 56, compared to the desktop average of 73, with the lowest score hitting a concerning 11. Compare the two speed charts, and you'll see how much of a difference there is between desktop and mobile speeds. The average mobile speed score is below any SEO industry benchmarks, and is an area where most contractor websites can benefit from optimization.

This decline is unexpected, as companies often prioritize mobile site performance to cater to on-the-go users. Typically, they streamline their mobile websites to speed up loading by removing non-essential content. The significant lag in mobile speeds among these top contractors may indicate missed opportunities to optimize for the growing mobile audience.

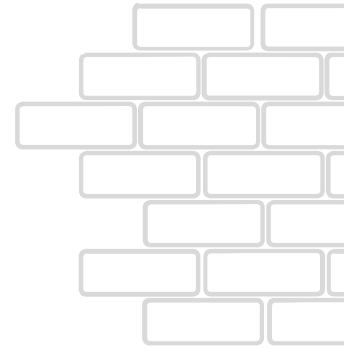
Focusing on mobile speed enhancements can provide a competitive advantage for small and mid-sized contractors. By minimizing unnecessary elements, compressing images, and leveraging modern coding practices, even companies without extensive resources can achieve meaningful improvements in mobile performance. (More tips on page 13.)

mobile page speeds





When a site doesn't load quickly, we abandon it. Search engines track this behavior, prioritizing the searcher's experience over the authority of the content alone.



backlinks

Several factors determine your website’s domain authority, including your website’s technical capabilities and speed, quality content, and user experience. Backlinks are one of the most significant factors in domain authority, which ultimately results in higher ranking with search engines. A backlink is simply a link from another website pointing to yours, acting as a vote of confidence in your site’s credibility and authority [hence the name Domain Authority].

In the construction industry, **valuable backlinks often come from press coverage of major construction projects, company news, community involvement, job boards, social media, and industry-related content.** These links enhance a company’s online visibility and authority in search rankings.

While our website auditing tools only found backlinks to 40% of the websites we reviewed,

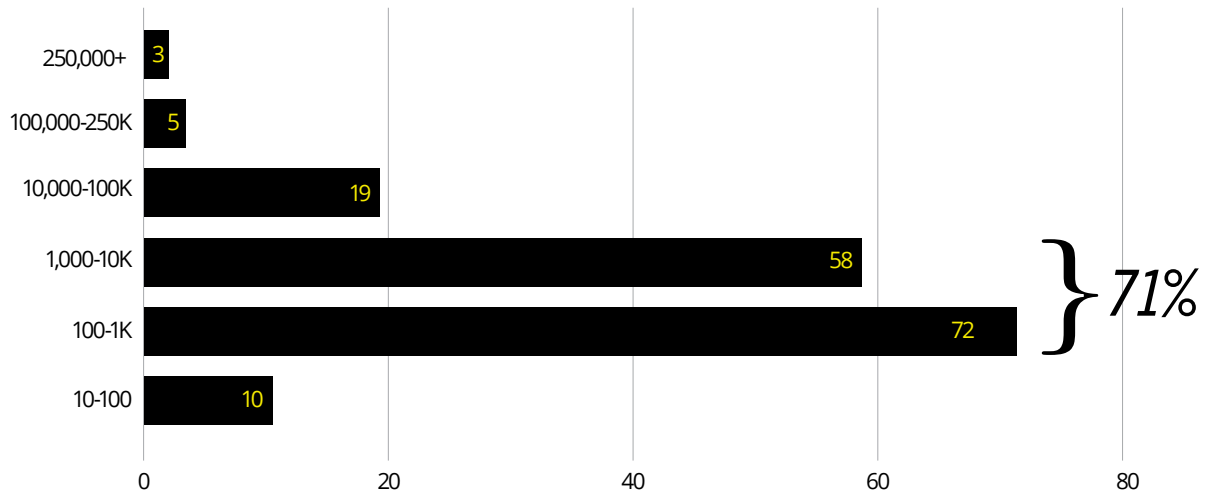
the impact was undeniable. Every contractor with more than 5,000 backlinks had a Domain Authority above 30.

In comparison, every website with a DA under 10 had fewer than 20 backlinks—a clear indication of

how critical backlinks are for boosting search rankings. Although the average number of backlinks was 15,546, that data is skewed because eight companies have over 100,000 backlinks, so use the median of 954 backlinks as your benchmark.

You’ll probably recognize several of the contractors with more than 100,000 backlinks: Fluor, McDermott International, Black & Veatch, DPR Construction, Haskell, Vinci Construction USA, AECOM, and Hensel Phelps—further demonstrating that a strong digital footprint goes hand in hand with industry leadership.

Average	14,837
Mean	1,008
Highest	345,809



spam scores

Not all backlinks carry the same weight. The quality and relevancy of a backlink matter just as much as the quantity—and the most valuable links come from websites with a high Domain Authority (DA). For example, a backlink from a local newspaper with a DA of 50 will have a far greater impact on your ranking than a link from a youth sports team’s website with a DA of 5.

However, not all backlinks are beneficial.

Search engines are increasingly cracking down on low-quality, spammy backlinks, particularly those from irrelevant or untrustworthy sources known for spam traffic.

These links can hurt a website’s credibility rather than help it. Fortunately, our analysis found that only 17% of contractors had a concerning spam score above 10, indicating that most firms maintain relatively clean backlink profiles.

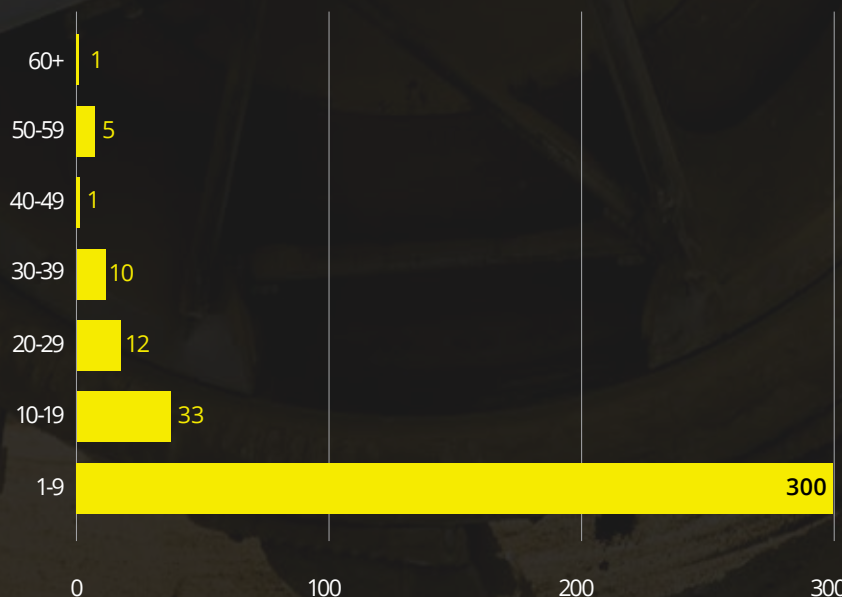
(In case you’re wondering, the large contractors with thousands of backlinks had relatively low spam scores.)

The websites with the worst spam scores generally had the worst domain authorities. Of the 17 websites with spam scores over 30, only 6 had domain authorities over 30.

This finding reinforces the importance of earning backlinks from reputable industry sources such as news outlets, trade organizations, and respected industry blogs to build a strong and sustainable online presence.

To reduce your spam score, you’ll want to use an SEO service or software that includes scoring backlinks. Once you identify the spam link (known as toxic links), you can contact that website, asking them to remove your link. You’ll probably not get a response, so utilize Google’s Disavow Tool to remove any association your website has with those bad links.

Average	6
Lowest	1
Highest	71



} 83%

the rise of ai in search

SEO is no longer limited to traditional search engines like Google and Bing. The landscape now includes voice search through devices like Alexa, Siri, and Google Assistant, social media search, and AI-powered search using tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Co-Pilot. While AI search isn't expected to overtake traditional search engines in the immediate future, its influence is rapidly growing, with 6% of searches in 2024 conducted using AI.

Given that the vast majority of contractors we researched had strong domain authority, we were curious to see if they were included in AI databases. To test this, we asked ChatGPT if it recognized each of the 400 construction companies and their websites. We found the vast majority of these construction companies (95.75%) in ChatGPT. However, ChatGPT could not provide a two to three-sentence summary for 17 companies, citing a lack of information.

It was surprising to see that even companies on ENR's Top 400 Contractors list were absent from ChatGPT's knowledge base. This finding underscores the fact that being included in AI results involves more than just traditional SEO efforts. AI systems take a holistic approach, factoring in a company's digital presence, media mentions, awards, customer reviews, and overall reputation.

For example, if someone asks AI for the "best construction company in Dallas,"

the AI will likely recommend companies with high visibility across multiple channels. These results include firms that appear on industry ranking lists, have won awards like Best Places to Work, are members of industry associations, maintain an active presence on LinkedIn, and accumulate positive Google reviews.

Is this approach entirely fair? Not always.

Unlike Google's algorithm, which can sometimes be manipulated with SEO tactics, AI algorithms attempt to present a broader and more qualitative perspective. While that may offer a more well-rounded answer, it may also disadvantage companies with a smaller digital footprint.

That said, it's crucial for construction companies to be aware of their standing in AI search results.

We recommend conducting periodic checks using AI tools.

To ensure the information an AI platform provides is accurate, simply ask it, "What do you know about [Your Company Name] located in [City] and [Your Website URL]?"

While AI search remains a small fraction of the market, its growth presents an opportunity. If your company couldn't capitalize on the .com boom of the late 1990s or the social media surge of the 2010s, now is your chance to establish a strong AI presence. Think of it as the next digital gold rush — one that proactive contractors can leverage to stay ahead of the competition.



why seo is essential for construction companies

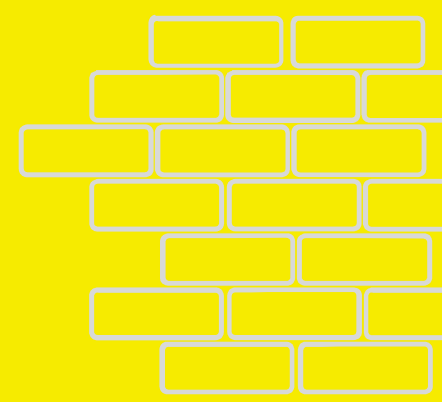
SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is a powerful digital marketing strategy that directly supports business growth by increasing sales opportunities and enhancing talent acquisition. For construction companies, **SEO is not just about visibility – it's about being found by the right prospects at the right time.**

Relying solely on traditional business development methods and word-of-mouth referrals limits your reach. SEO expands your presence to a broader audience, enabling your company to be discovered by prospective clients and employees you may have never encountered otherwise.

According to Gartner, B2B buyers complete 70% of their buying process online before contacting a company. In the construction sector, this often includes out-of-market developers searching for general contractors and construction managers in new regions and traveling GCs evaluating local trade contractors. Before making any inquiries, these prospects conduct extensive online research to assess whether your company aligns with their needs in terms of scope, experience, and company culture. Even after receiving a referral, prospects will visit your website and social channels before contacting you.

The same principle applies to recruitment. Potential employees, especially those under 45, rely heavily on online resources when exploring career opportunities. If your company doesn't appear in search results or lacks a robust online presence, you risk losing out on qualified candidates. In the eyes of these digital-savvy professionals, **if you're not visible online, you don't exist in their world.** It's a digital communication disconnect.

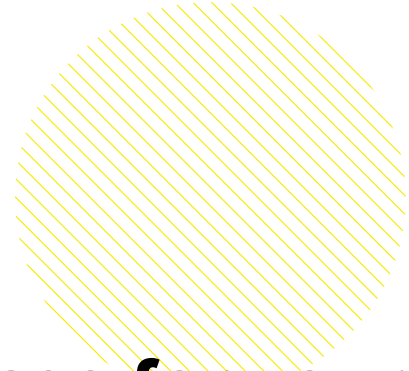
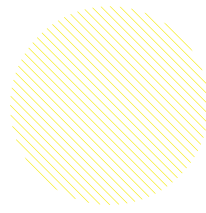
Investing in SEO ensures your construction company remains competitive, accessible, and positioned for long-term success. From generating leads to attracting top talent, a strategic SEO approach strengthens your online presence and connects you with the opportunities that drive growth.





““

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how to improve seo for your construction company

Search engines like Google and AI tools like ChaptGPT use complex algorithms with dozens of factors to rank websites. While the technical details may seem overwhelming, the fundamentals of SEO have remained consistent for years.

At its core, SEO success is built on three pillars: Content, Backlinks, and Sharability.

To improve your company's visibility in search results, focus on these key areas:

Content Quality - Google, Bing, and AI tools favor high-quality, relevant content that directly answers searchers' questions. For construction companies, this means creating informative pages about your services, projects, case studies, and helpful blog posts. Consider addressing common industry challenges, sharing insights on construction trends, or offering educational content that positions your company as an authority.

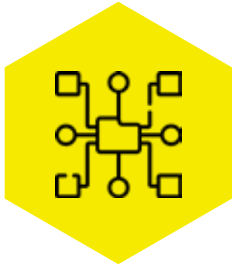
Targeted Keywords - Get specific with the keywords you're optimizing your website and writing content for instead of trying to boil the ocean with a generic term like "construction". You'll rank higher and faster with a targeted keyword phrase (known as longtail keywords) like "Phoenix Senior Living Construction" than "general contractor."

improving construction SEO [continued]

Technical SEO ensures your website is easy for search engines to navigate and index.

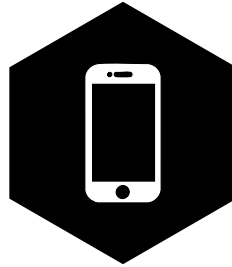
While you may rely on a web developer for these tasks, it's helpful to understand the basics.

Key areas include:



SITE STRUCTURE

Ensure straightforward navigation with logical page hierarchies.



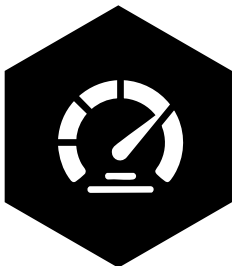
MOBILE OPTIMIZATION

Most searches begin on mobile devices, so your site must be mobile-friendly.



SITE SECURITY

A secure site (signified with HTTPS) builds trust with both users and search engines.



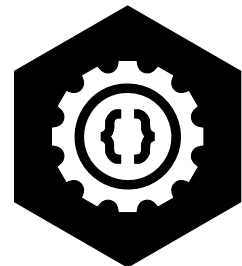
SITE SPEED

Fast-loading pages provide a better user experience and rank higher.



INDEXING AND SCHEMA MARKUP

Proper coding helps search engines understand your content.



SCRIPTS

Decrease loading time by removing unused themes and plugins to reduce the number of scripts used.



improving construction SEO [continued]

Image Compression - If you've worked on websites before, you probably know that the internet uses a 72 dpi resolution compared to printing at 300 dpi. Use image compression software or plugin to significantly speed up your website, especially on those large header images. **Image compression is vital on homepages and project pages since most of that content is imagery.**

Server Location - Believe it or not, your web server's location also influences web speed and the user experience. Using a local server will speed up your website, but it won't necessarily improve your search engine results because the search engine's spiders aren't local. You can upgrade your web hosting to a Content Delivery Network (CDN) to distribute your website to servers closer to each visitor. (This also improves website security.)

Security Certificate - Several years ago, search engines started scoring secure websites with a security certificate higher (viewable to users with the https in the address bar) because this improves user experience and means the website is less likely to be spam. In recent years, search engines like Google have blocked unsecured websites.

Backlinks and Authority - Backlinks are links from other websites that direct users to your site. Search engines view these links as a signal that your content is valuable and authoritative.

Partnering with industry publications, participating in construction directories, or contributing guest articles can all help build backlinks. Additionally, encourage satisfied clients and project partners to mention and link to your website.

Relevance - To rank well, **your content needs to match what your target audience is searching for.** This means using relevant keywords naturally in your text, headlines, and meta descriptions. Relevant keywords may include your geographic area, capabilities, trade focus, market sectors, and niche services.

User Experience (UX) - Search engines monitor how visitors interact with your site. Factors like time on site, bounce rate (how quickly users leave your page), and number of pages visited influence your search ranking. Ensure your site is easy to navigate, visually appealing, and offers clear calls to action. Including engaging visuals, like project photos and videos, can also enhance the user experience.

Update Your Content - You can't launch a website and leave it untouched for several years. Even the most optimized website will drop in search results over time because the content gets stale. Share company news, blog posts, job openings, and, of course, add recently completed projects to your website to add fresh content that is naturally chock full of excellent keywords.

content for construction seo

To aid in developing the right content, many search professionals utilize the EEAT framework to evaluate the quality of content:



Experience

Demonstrate real-world, firsthand knowledge through projects, case studies, expert insights, and on-the-ground perspectives.



Expertise

Highlight your team's credentials, years of experience, certifications, and specialized knowledge.



Authoritativeness

Establish your company as a trusted industry leader through media features, awards, and quality backlinks from respected construction-related sources.



Trustworthiness

Ensure transparency by displaying accurate, up-to-date content, contact information, client testimonials, and project descriptions with keywords.

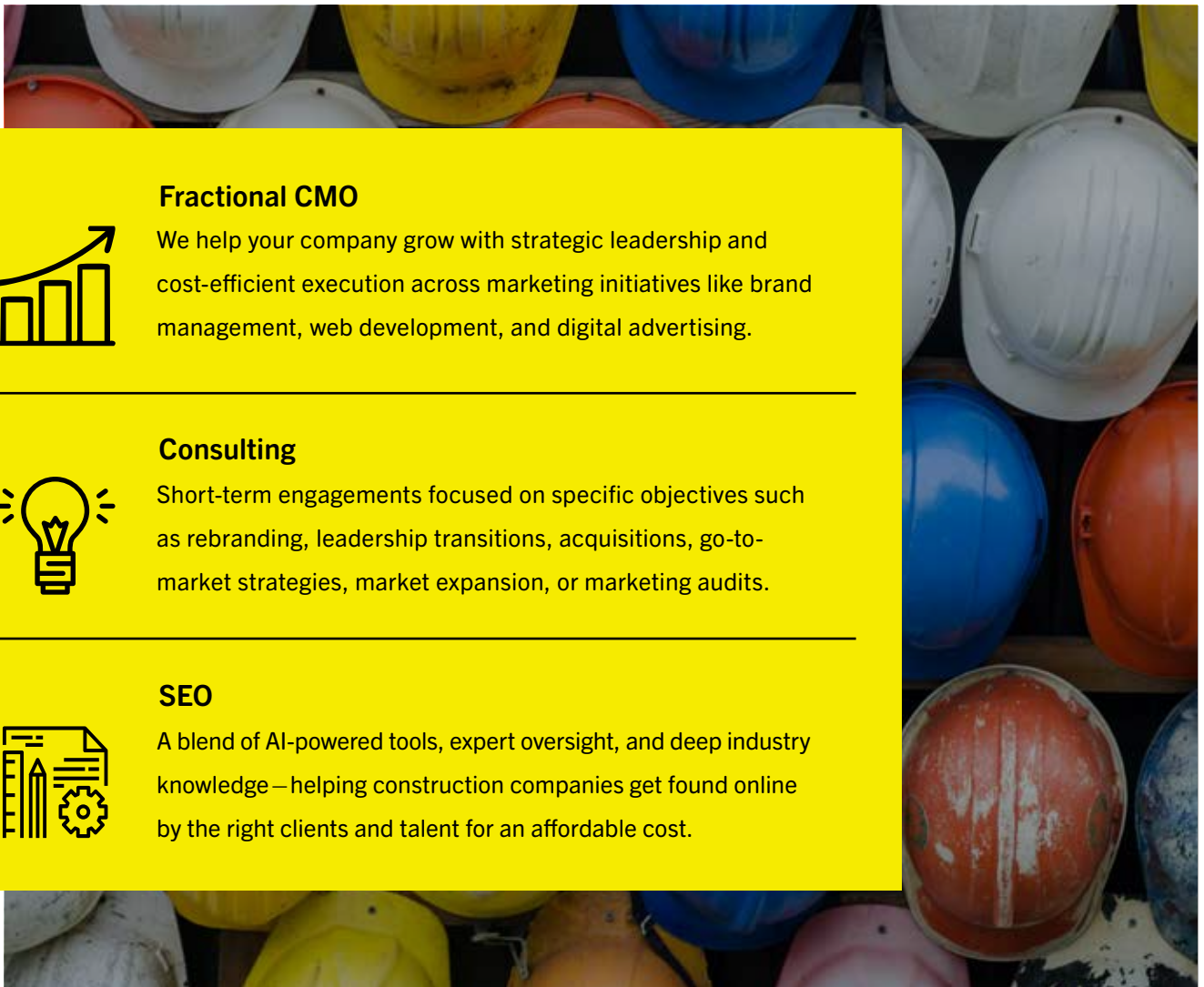
By following these principles and maintaining a consistent SEO strategy, **your construction company will improve its search visibility and build credibility with prospective clients and employees.**

If you need help with your construction company's SEO, contact us. We've developed a robust, yet affordable SEO service specifically for GCs and trade contractors.

who is AltCMO?

AltCMO is a construction-focused marketing firm specializing in fractional Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and SEO services. **Our CMOs have decades of experience working with construction companies**, architecture and engineering firms, and construction technology (ConTech) companies.

We provide comprehensive marketing strategies, executive leadership, and hands-on mentoring for marketing teams. We help our clients build sustainable momentum and achieve substantial growth.



Fractional CMO

We help your company grow with strategic leadership and cost-efficient execution across marketing initiatives like brand management, web development, and digital advertising.



Consulting

Short-term engagements focused on specific objectives such as rebranding, leadership transitions, acquisitions, go-to-market strategies, market expansion, or marketing audits.



SEO

A blend of AI-powered tools, expert oversight, and deep industry knowledge – helping construction companies get found online by the right clients and talent for an affordable cost.



how we help construction companies with seo

After witnessing the high fees and disappointing results many of our fractional CMO clients experienced with their previous SEO providers, we created a proprietary AI-powered search optimization program tailored specifically for the build industry.

Unlike traditional search firms that waste time trying to understand the construction landscape, we already know it inside and out. By eliminating unnecessary account management and automating manual tasks, we deliver a more efficient and affordable way to grow your construction business online.

our proprietary aec-built seo process



Industry Experience

Our team members have decades of experience growing construction companies.



Powerful AI Tools

Advanced tools streamline processes without sacrificing quality.



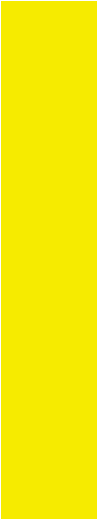
Expert Oversight

With expert oversight, our AI-powered approach streamlines the process but never runs on autopilot.

let's get started

Want to know how your construction company's website is performing? **Contact us today for a complimentary SEO review.** Let us show you how our industry expertise and AI-powered insights can elevate your online presence and drive measurable growth.

www.altcmo.net | seo@altcmo.net





credits

Research & Content

Perryn Olson, FSMPS, CPSM, CCMP

Report Design

Perryn Olson, FSMPS, CPSM, CCMP

Ralph Caparros

Support

Ryan Kovach



Unlike traditional search firms that waste time trying to understand the construction landscape, we already know it inside and out.