

AEO and SEO Tactics to Boost Online Search Visibility

SEO, and now AEO, are critical components of the digital marketing mix and require consistent attention to stay aligned with consumer, digital and industry evolutions. CMOs can use the tactics explored in this research to improve their AEO and SEO performance.

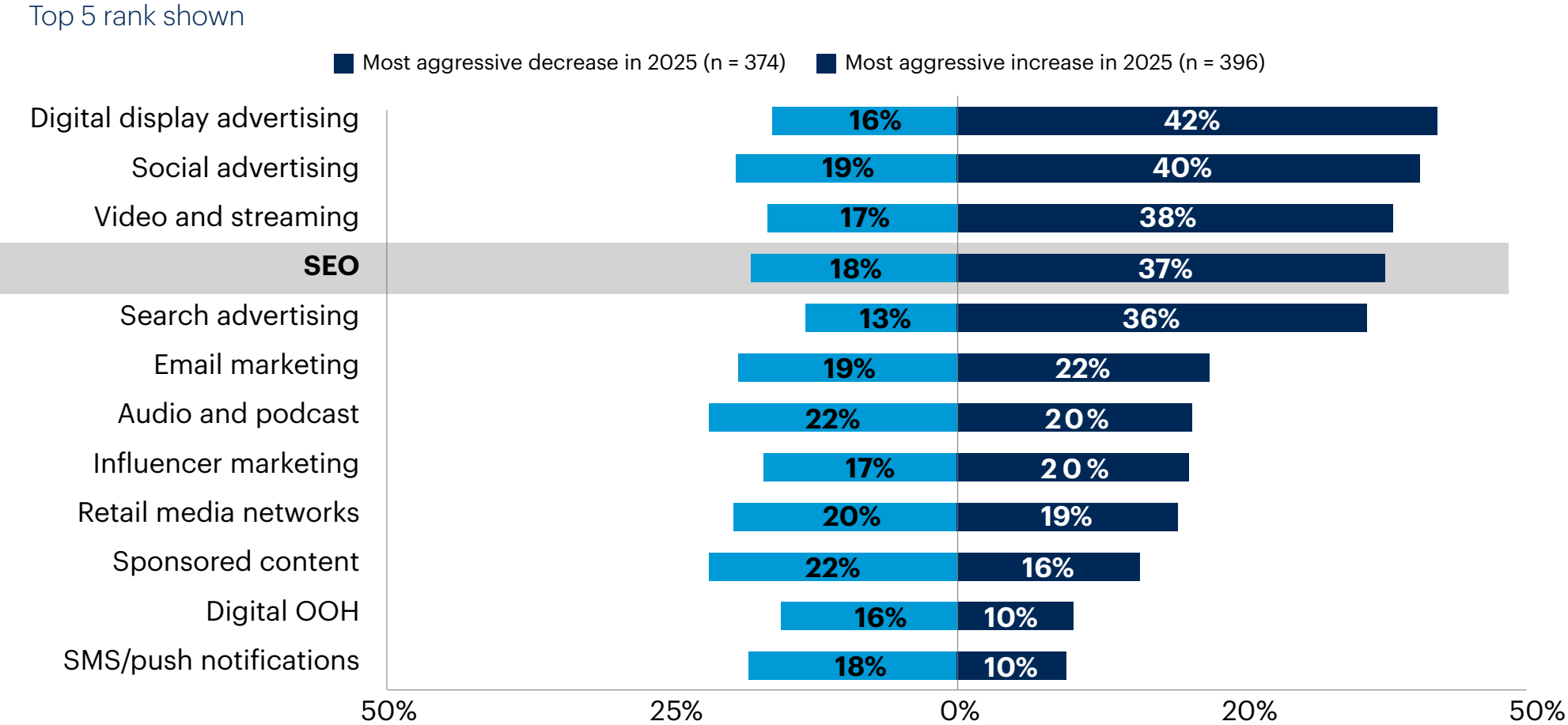


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In a rapidly evolving search landscape, both search engine optimization (SEO) and answer engine optimization (AEO) play crucial roles in ensuring content discoverability and relevance. SEO helps websites rank higher in traditional search results, driving organic traffic and building long-term visibility. AEO focuses on structuring content for consumption by AI-powered answer engines (e.g., Google AI Mode, OpenAI's ChatGPT) to easily extract and present information. By focusing on both SEO and AEO in an increasingly AI-driven world, brands can position their content as a trusted source and ensure it reaches the right audience at the right time within their journey.

SEO currently accounts for 8.9% of total digital channel allocation, and 37% of CMOs are expected to aggressively increase investment in it (see Figure 1).¹ CMOs recognize engine optimization — SEO and AEO — as paramount to future digital success and continue to invest in them accordingly. But an increased spend commitment does not guarantee results without a clear vision and solid channel strategy.

» Figure 1. Changes in Investments for Digital Marketing Channels in 2025



Q: Which of the following channels do you plan to most aggressively increase/decrease in spending 2025 compared to 2024 levels?
Source: 2025 Gartner CMO Spend Survey
Note: SEO = search engine optimization; OOH = out of home

AEO Tactics

To stay visible and relevant for AI engines, focus on delivering high-quality, structured content that showcases trust and expertise, allowing AI-powered search to push your content as the authoritative answer.

Design Content for Answer Engine Extraction

AI engine results (e.g., Google AI mode, Perplexity AI) focus on concise summations that provide quick insights in response to user queries. Focus on creating distinguished content that offers value and provides human perspectives. Such content is typically optimized for high-level takeaways, uses natural language, is well structured and up-to-date, and leverages diverse formats — such as blogs, infographics, videos or affiliate content.

Implement Structured Data

Leverage structured data by making content easy to understand and classify by these systems, thus maximizing visibility in AI-powered answer engines. AI engines rely on structured data to process and present content, so it's essential to ensure data accuracy, completeness and regular monitoring for updating.

Follow Google's EEAT Principles

EEAT principles (experience, expertise, authority, trustworthiness) are a core part of Google's search quality rating guidelines. AI engines prioritize content that demonstrates EEAT when generating results and recommendations.² Ensure your content demonstrates these principles by highlighting real-world examples, showcasing credentials, building a strong brand presence and maintaining transparency.

Boost Brand Presence and Reputation

Increase authority and trust with AI engines by incorporating positive reviews and testimonials on brand websites. Ratings and reviews are strong signals of trust, experience and social proof. These elements add fresh and unique content, increasing topical relevance and diverse perspectives that AI engines value.

Amplify Social Media Presence

AI engines increasingly incorporate social media content into their results by detecting emerging trends, public sentiment and authoritative voices through analysis of posts, comments and engagement metrics.

The conversational nature of social media content aligns with AI engines' need to understand natural language and user intent to deliver contextually relevant answers. For CMOs, this means that it's critical to drive alignment across social and content teams, maintain a high-quality content cadence, optimize social profiles and video content, and leverage influencer partnerships.

Rethink Your Search Performance Measurement Strategy

Decreased organic traffic resulting from algorithm updates and zero-click search behavior has shifted key metrics from results page engagement (like click-through rate) to visibility (AI placement rankings) and customer experience (conversions). Prioritize conversion-focused KPIs over impressions, update performance baselines, and carefully select AI search metrics and measurement tools, ensuring these align with evolving platform capabilities and market trends.

On-Page SEO Tactics

To optimize outcomes from on-page SEO tactics, prioritize customer-centric content, targeted keywords, optimized metadata, strong site structure and mobile-optimized design.

Diversify Content Strategies

Along with clicks resulting in more website traffic, take a customer-centric approach by developing content that aligns with audience needs, preferences and search intent, using both hard and soft content to drive engagement and relevancy. As Google's algorithm comprehension now extends beyond the written word, content forms must be diverse (image, text, video, audio) to offer a breadth of educational pieces that satiate consumer demand. Regularly benchmarking content performance against key metrics will help identify gaps and optimize for greater impact.

Cultivate Keyword Strategies

The relevance of keywords to the user's search query (i.e., the natural language typed into the search box) drives visibility. For this, identify which keyword categories are most important for the business's visibility, while also

understanding and prioritizing the keywords customers use in search. Additionally, content must also align to query intent. Showcase brand relevance to the search query by incorporating natural language within content.

Optimize Site Metadata

CMOs must optimize structured metadata (e.g., title tags, HTML header tags, last-modified-by time stamp) to ensure that whenever site pages are viewed on Google's SERP or shared via social media, they display all associated information for a richer result. Structured metadata is a standardized format for providing information about a page and classifying the page content (e.g., the ingredients, the calories on a recipe page).³ Your teams should craft unique, keyword-rich titles and descriptions with clear calls to action. Additionally, prioritize proper formatting and accessibility by using HTML tags for headers and image alt tags.

Fortify Information Architecture

An effective SEO strategy relies on a strong information architecture, which provides the blueprint for site structure, menu navigation and site search; without it,

both search engines and customers struggle to find and engage with your content. Ensure your teams implement a clear, well-structured taxonomy, use consistent and simple URLs, and maintain robust internal linking and navigation frameworks to improve site performance.

Maximize Page Speed

The amount of time a page takes to load is a clear indicator of quality to the search engine algorithm, as organic rankings are affected by the pace at which websites load. Several issues, ranging from unnecessary code to unoptimized images, can negatively affect page speed. Create a formal plan and work with technology partners to ensure site speed is a priority. The plan should consist of agreed-upon performance measures, tools to monitor performance, a testing cadence, key stakeholders involved in different layers of the technology stack and mechanisms used to implement improvements.

Design for Mobile

Because Google primarily uses the mobile version of a website's content for ranking and indexing, CMOs must ensure they have a fully mobile-optimized website.

Off-Page SEO Tactics

Build site authority and trustworthiness by actively managing backlink building, brand mentions, social media engagement, influencer outreach and guest blogging.

Improve Trust Through Link Building

Invest in appropriate link-building strategies to gain favor with the algorithm. The quantity and type of link and the quality of backlinks (different domains that refer back to your website) influence your website’s dependability with the search algorithm and improves rankings on the SERP. The more domains that link back to your website (quantity) and the higher their web authority score (quality), the more trustworthy your site is considered.

Local SEO Tactics

Local SEO aims to improve visibility for location-based searches (e.g., “coffee shop near me”). It includes optimizing Google Business Profiles, managing local citations and reviews, and ensuring consistency of name, address and phone (NAP) data across the web.

Enhance Local Visibility

Targeting consumers in specified areas (regions, states, cities) is an integral part of any brick-and-mortar SEO strategy. Optimize your site for local search results through local content, on-page optimization and even link building to allow consumers to quickly find local business information, getting them that much closer to conversion.

As search and answer engine algorithms rapidly evolve, integrating AEO and SEO tactics is essential for sustained online visibility. By consistently optimizing content, structure, and measurement strategies, you can ensure your brands remain discoverable and relevant in an increasingly AI-driven landscape.

resources, or leading cross-functional programs and strategies with marketing. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents represented organizations with annual revenue of \$1 billion or more. The respondents came from a diverse range of industries: manufacturing (n = 52), financial services (n = 50), insurance (n = 43), consumer products (n = 43), healthcare (n = 42), travel and hospitality (n = 37), IT and business services (n = 36), retail (n = 36), pharma (n = 32), and media (n = 31). Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

- ² [The Role Of E-E-A-T In AI Narratives: Building Brand Authority for Search Success](#), Search Engine Journal.
- ³ [Introduction to Structured Data Markup in Google Search](#), Google Search Central.
- ⁴ **Gartner analysis of Google search data (n = 5,996 keywords, June 2025).** This research uses data from Google search engine result pages (SERPs) collected from the New York City area by a proprietary Gartner-developed crawler. The keywords selected align to the retail, healthcare, consumer goods, financial services, manufacturing and natural resources, and travel and hospitality sectors, accounting for more than four billion queries a month. These results should be taken directionally because they do not wholly reflect the targeting parameters that are available to search marketers.

¹ **2025 Gartner CMO Spend Survey.** This survey explored top-line marketing budgets with the goal of understanding how changing customer journeys, pressures from the C-suite and cost challenges affect marketing’s spending priorities and channel effectiveness. Conducted online from January through March 2025, the research included 402 respondents from North America (n = 202), the United Kingdom (n = 97) and Europe (n = 103; including France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). Participants were required to be involved in decisions related to setting or influencing marketing strategies/planning, aligning marketing budgets/

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