

# The SEO Buyers Guide.





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If you are thinking about outsourcing your SEO and want to make sure your potential partner actually knows what they are doing AND will be able to deliver the results they are promising, then this SEO buyers guide is for you.

These 14 simple questions (and our answers to them) are based on over 20 years' experience of delivering market beating results and generating serious ROI for our clients. Many of whom had been sceptical about SEO before working with us, due to the poor performance of previous agencies.

These are the questions that would have helped them avoid choosing the wrong partner....



# 1. Explain to me how SEO works

It seems like an obvious question, but too many SEO agencies will focus on just one aspect of a process, eg on page technical audits. To succeed at SEO, your website must maximise its score across the experience model which caters for 3 stakeholders:

- Search engines
- Users: Your buyers and target audience(s)
- Internet: Your buyers' friends and family, influencers, and journalists

It's no accident that the internet experience is over 50% of the algorithm as Google tends to trust what others say about your content more than what your content says about you.

## SEO attempts to maximise the experiences of each stakeholder by providing:

- **Technical:** Site audits to ensure Google can find the content, understand it and understand it's relative importance among other pages within your site.
- **Content:** Recall Google ranks content in response to your buyer's search queries. Therefore, creating and publishing the right content is important to maximise the user's search experience.
- **Digital PR:** Creating content that earns links from high traffic sites is what will signal to Google that your content maximises the internet experience of your site.

### Great SEO maximises Search Experiences

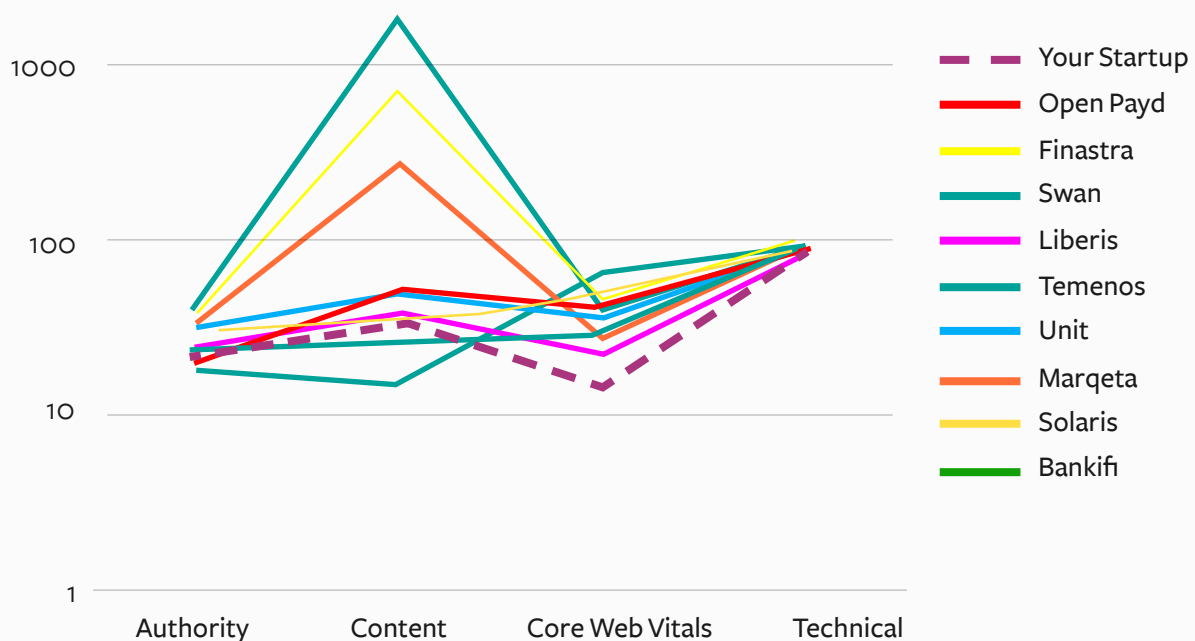
| ENGINE                                                                 | USER                                                    | INTERNET                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Google,<br>Bing,<br>Baidu                                              | Your buyers                                             | Journalists, Editors, influencers,<br>Your buyers' family and friends |
| TECH                                                                   | CONTENT                                                 | DIGITAL PR                                                            |
| Can Google <b>find</b> your content? Does Google <b>understand</b> it? | Does your content give your buyers the <b>answers</b> ? | Is your content <b>so good</b> people <b>send traffic</b> to it?      |

## 2. How would you determine our SEO strategy?

This is a key question for any partner. What you are looking for here is a robust process, ideally built on data and empirical proof. Anything woolly in response to this question should sound alarm bells.

Our SEO strategy is driven by the data. Knowing how search engines work, we benchmark your site against your competitors to see which experience your site falls short on.

The chart shows how your startup might compare with other competitors across the 4 main areas of SEO strategy.



Knowing this in advance helps us understand the critical path to organic growth saving months and resources.

Because of our holistic approach we're not limited to site audits and instead are well equipped to close your gap to your competitors in the shortest possible time.

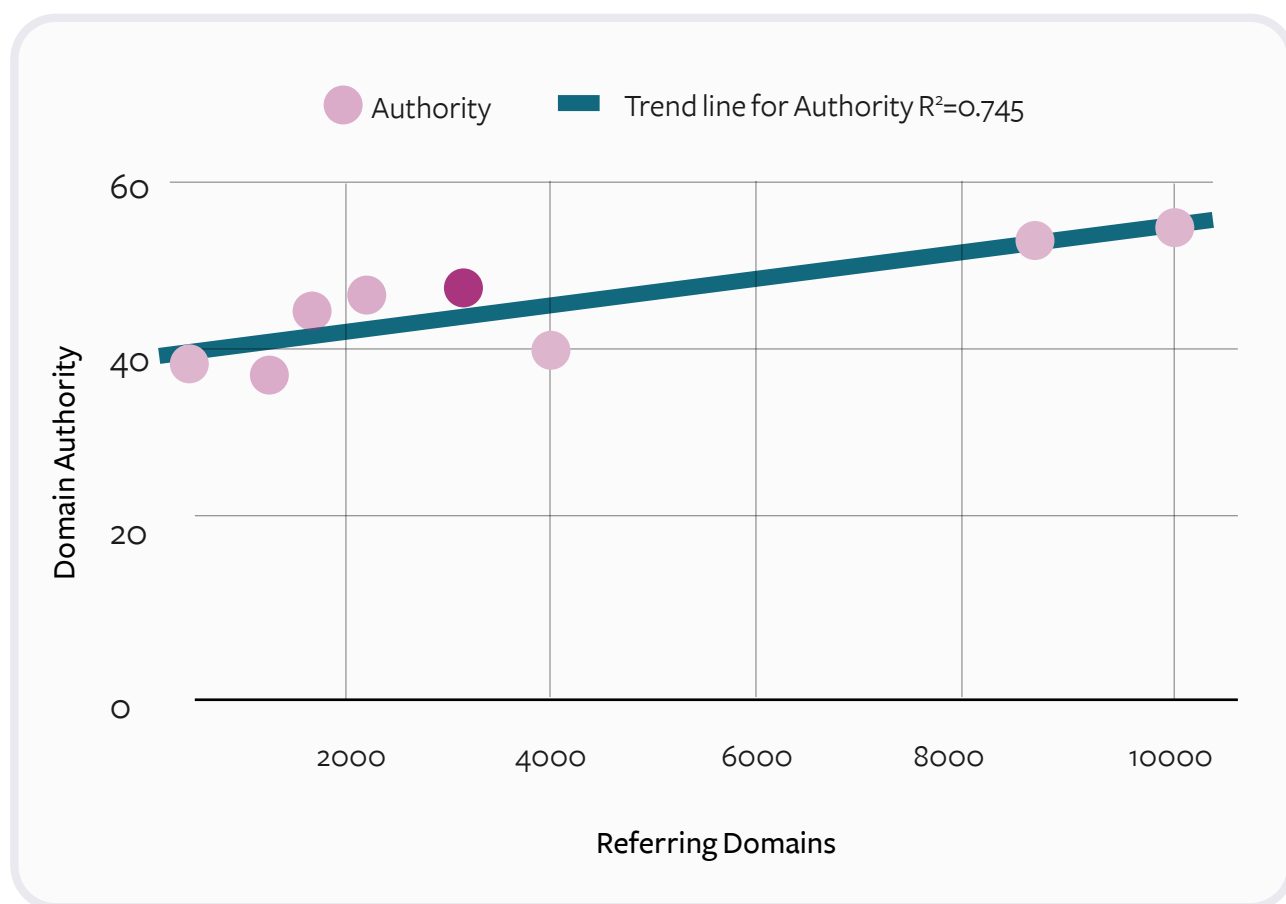
Do you know your SEO strengths and weaknesses?

### 3. How do we know your recommendations will work?

Often agencies will answer this question with a case study from another client. It worked for them, it will work for you. Of course what they never share are examples that haven't worked and each client's SEO needs are different.

A better answer would be based on analytics and data. For example:

Because each recommendation is scientifically tested for impact:



Taking this data driven approach allows us to recommend with confidence that our SEO will transform your website fortunes.

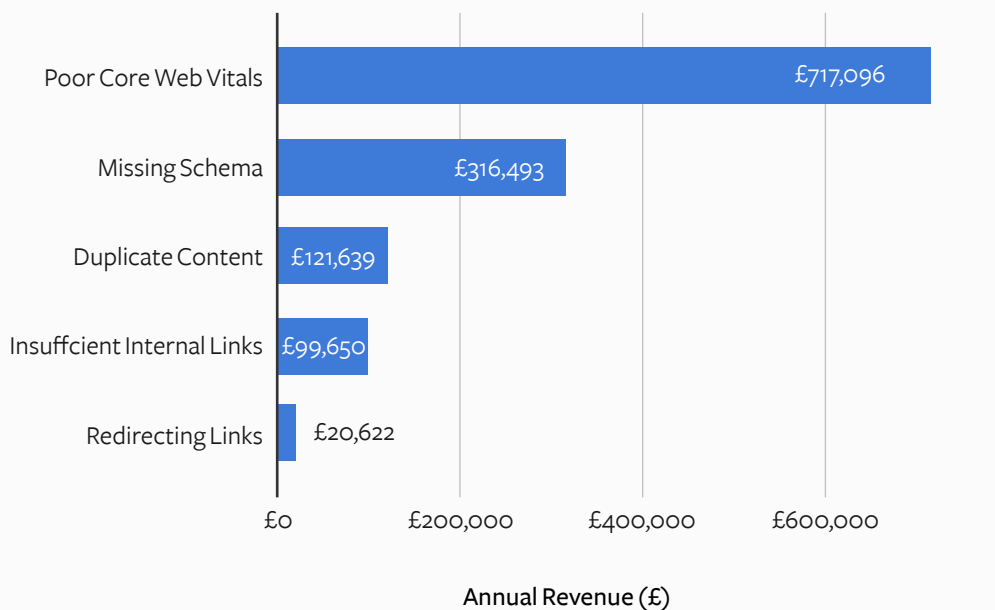


## 4. How do you prioritise your recommendations?

Services checklists, that start with a technical audit and then gradually move to on and off page content, are a classic response to this question. What that response does not uncover are quick wins and what task will generate the best outcomes fastest.

Whether your business is ecommerce, B2B or other, we understand there isn't a limitless budget or time to fix everything.

Using data science we prioritise recommendations by impact, whether it's revenue, leads, traffic or other:



Rather than give you SEO problems to fix, we show you where the money is, making our SEO commercially focused.

## 5. How does your SEO **scale** our growth?

SEO is traditionally measured in SERP uplift and improved position. But will that translate into ROI and hard cash? Your agency should be able to help you make accurate commercial projections for how your SEO programme will scale your growth.

Our approach to SEO is about taking the Pareto approach where the 10% moves drive 90% of the impact.

That means coming up with simple and elegant solutions that will deliver results

in the shortest space in time which being scalable i.e. affecting as many sites pages as possible in 1 fell swoop.

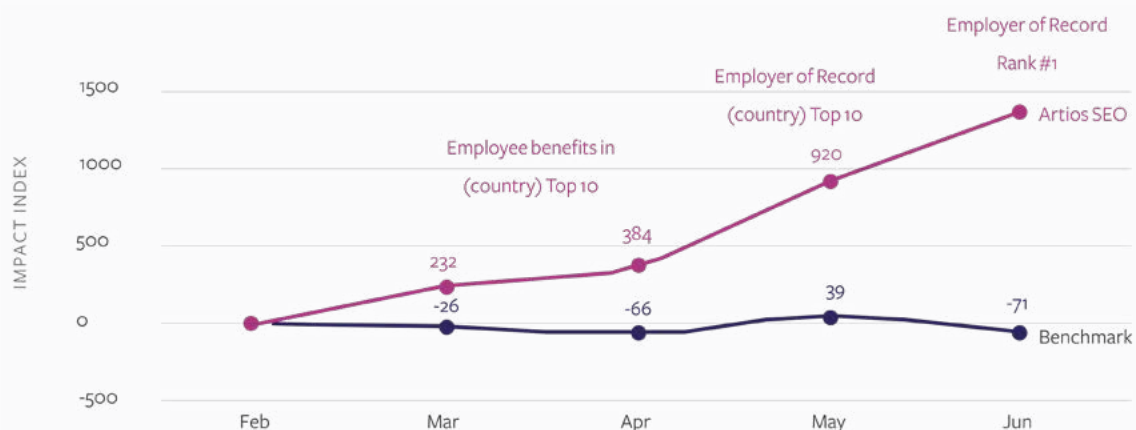
Furthermore, we know businesses don't want to spend a penny more on SEO (or any other business activity) than they have to.

We agree, which is why we suggest automated solutions to bake into your CMS, so that your SEO issues never recur and cost you revenue ever again.

But don't take our word for it, ask our clients:

### +12x Organic users pm in 4 months above benchmark

Benchmark is the non brand organic traffic Boundless would have accrued had no further SEO activity taken place



“Artios has helped us deliver massive (12X pm) growth in a short space of time having assisted us with the site migrations and driving initiatives to grow search. As always their work is reassuringly backed by data and their encyclopaedic knowledge of SEO. They are always full of enthusiasm and energy. I highly recommend them.”

IRINA DZHAMBAZOVA, HEAD OF COMMS, BOUNDLESS



## 6. How do you know what **content** we should be creating?

Many agencies will reference tools like SEMRush to take a guess at what may be working best for your competitors from a content perspective. This is fine but misses the analytical accuracy of a data science approach.

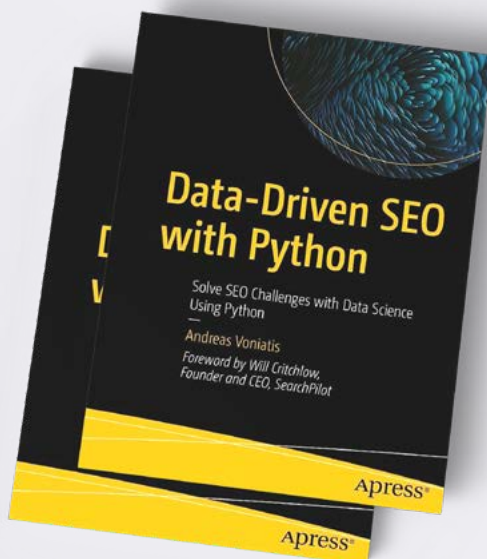
The beauty of SEO is that Google is objective and what Google thinks is in the public domain in the form of their search results.

We go that step further and we use the same tools Google uses to rank content, that is data science.

So while we don't pretend to be experts in your industry, data science allows us to use your competitor data to your advantage that is:

1. **What to create:** using set mathematics we can cut through the noise and tell you the core content Google expects of a brand operating in your search space
2. **How to create it:** such that your recommended content brief (and the creative itself if you let us produce it) will contain all the required sections and tags to rank top.

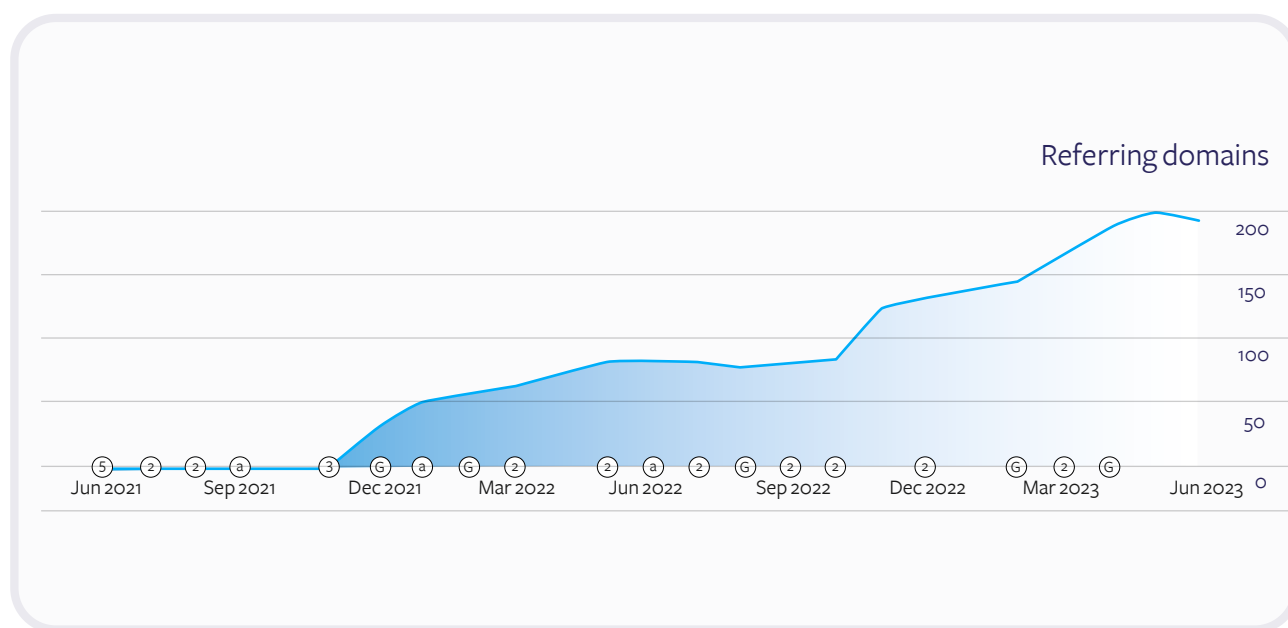
We'll even show you our methods just as we're showing the SEO industry the world over in our [Data Driven SEO book](#).



## 7. How do you go about building increasing domain **authority** of our site(s)?

Nearly all SEOs buy link placements through link marketplaces, whether they are transparent about that process or not is another matter.

We take a more sustainable and effective approach - one that Google likes and rewards. As a result, our campaigns typically earn between links from 20-200 from high traffic sites for over a 12 to 24 month period.



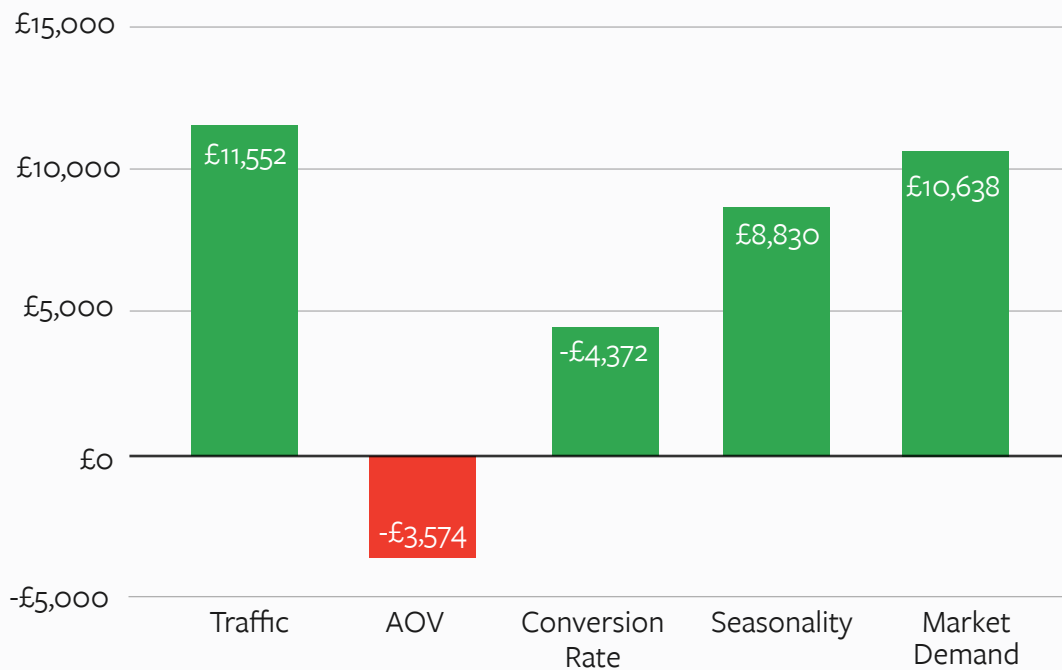
These signals replicate those of leading brands like Amazon and Apple, demonstrating to Google that your content, despite your challenger status, is on the right track.

So unlike your competitors, you'll be looking forward to profiting from algorithm updates Google releases multiple times a year. When all is said and done, the ROI on our campaigns is 5X better and more scalable than the SEO industry standard.

## 8. How do you report SEO performance?

Typical SEO reports bombard you with which keywords went up and down, but how do you translate that into commercial impact?

We focus on the trends i.e. how much revenue is down to our SEO and other factors:



This means everyone knows:

1. How we're doing
2. Why performance is what it is
3. And how to make it even better

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## 9. What performance guarantees do you provide?

Guarantees are few and far between in the SEO industry, although you probably receive messages daily guaranteeing you position 1 in Google, these kind of claims are not to be trusted. While we can't ethically guarantee position 1 in Google, we focus on what really matters - the impact on your business.

Who cares about a number 1 rank if it doesn't deliver business results?

Thanks to our data driven methods, we guarantee 200% ROI on our SEO fees.

## 10. Where does your own agency rank in Google?

A good SEO agency should practise what it preaches. Where do they rank on Google for any competitive SEO term?

- Does your SEO rank for a competitive SEO term?
- Do they take their own medicine?
- If not, why should you trust them?

Among other highly competitive terms, we rank #1 for 'data driven SEO' which not only generates over 600 searches per month (source: Google Search Console), it delivers us new customers.

And we're not stopping there. Let us help you to become unstoppable.

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## 11. How are you better than an in-house SEO?

An in-house SEO is great. You get all of their time, they get to know your business and build relationships with the people needed to make things happen.

That's all well and good until they:

- Ask for budget for all of the tools to get the data
- Don't have the data science skills, if they did they'd want a 6 figure salary as a minimum
- Don't get constant exposure to other markets and industries to get a global view of what Google is doing

On the other hand, our fees are all inclusive of data, we have the data science skills, we work with and have worked with businesses across (and almost all!) industries.

## 12. What industry recognition do you have?

Industry recognition isn't everything but it helps. After all, we tend to trust what others say about someone than what they say about themselves. So why should your SEO agency be any different? We've spoken at Brighton SEO, our work has been covered in various industry publications including:

- Search Engine Journal
- Search Engine Land
- UK Search Awards (shortlisted for innovation)
- PR Week
- The Independent

Of course, what we deliver to our clients and retaining them is worth far more any award or press coverage we could achieve.



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## 13. How will you come up with the **keywords** for us to target?

What matters is ensuring your keywords are the ones that:

- Your buyers would use throughout their entire search journey (not just the high converting ones)
- Google expects of a brand operating in your search space

To achieve that your SEO consultants should be looking at a variety of data sources including your Google Search Console and your competitors. These are detailed at length (and with code) in Andreas' Data Driven SEO book.

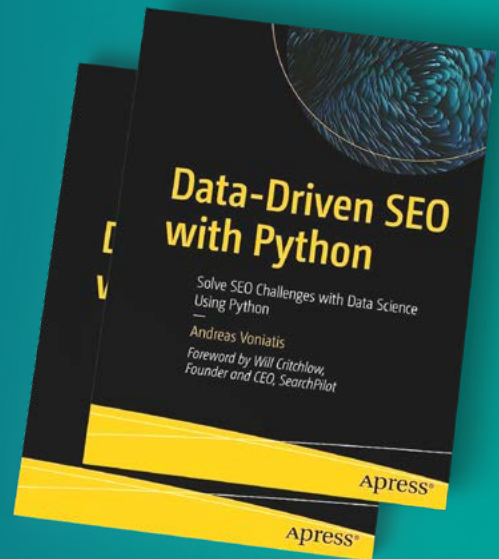
Using data science on keyword data, we model the critical keywords that get the right searches leading to conversions.

## 14. How do you **integrate** SEO with Paid Media and other channels?

Making organic and paid media work together create commercial outcomes that are greater than the sum of the 2 channels.

Your SEO agency should be maximising the opportunities by way of:

- Targeting relevant but low (or zero) ROAS search phrases
- Adjusting bids on high converting keywords so that your buyers see you regardless of where they are on the search results



## About the Author

This guide was written by our founder and lead consultant Andreas Voniatis. Andreas is a recognised expert and one of the original practitioners of data driven SEO. His book Data Driven SEO, was recently published by Springer.

Andreas is regularly asked to contribute as a leading expert in Data Driven SEO on a range of international trade titles/Podcasts and has spoken at Brighton SEO on the same topic. He is an ambassador for Rank Ranger and OnCrawl, some of the biggest tools in SEO.

See more testimonial, guides and examples of our work at our website: [Artois.io](https://Artois.io)

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“Working with Artios on complex data science projects were a pleasure, with the outputs going on to drive a series of large scale initiatives.”

