

# SEO + AEO Capabilities

Build durable organic visibility and become a source AI answer engines cite.

# The Visibility Model Has Changed

**Search visibility is no longer a single-channel discipline.**

**Customers still search with keywords—but they increasingly ask conversational questions in AI answer experiences.**

## **Traditional search journey**

“executive coach Fairfield County”

“dumpster rental Westchester NY”

“Ticket to Work Connecticut”

## **AI-search journey**

“Who are the best executive coaches in Fairfield County for communication and career growth?”

“What size dumpster do I need for a kitchen renovation?”

“How do I apply for Ticket to Work in Connecticut?”

**The objective: be present when people search with keywords and when they ask questions.**



**Hallon Havre**

# Why SEO Still Matters

SEO creates the discoverability foundation for sustainable organic acquisition.

Captures demand from people actively looking for services, products, solutions, or providers.

Builds a compounding acquisition channel instead of paying for every click.

Improves qualified traffic, local visibility, calls, form submissions, bookings, and ecommerce revenue.  
Reduces reliance on paid media for high-intent discovery queries.

Establishes the technical, content, and authority signals that also support AI retrieval.

| SEO Pillar                | What We Evaluate                                                     | Business Outcome                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Crawlability & indexation | Robots.txt, sitemaps, status codes, canonicals, redirects, rendering | Priority pages can be found and indexed |
| Technical performance     | Mobile rendering, LCP, INP, CLS, scripts                             | Fewer ranking and conversion barriers   |
| On-page relevance         | Titles, H1–H4, semantic HTML, internal links                         | Better alignment to real queries        |
| Content & authority       | Intent coverage, freshness, links, reviews, trust                    | Broader visibility and credibility      |



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# Why AEO Matters Now

AEO makes the brand usable in answer engines.

Answer Engine Optimization prepares a site so AI systems can retrieve, interpret, summarize, and cite its information when users ask natural-language questions.

AI answer experiences can synthesize an answer before a user reaches conventional results.

A citation or source mention places the brand inside the answer—not merely in a list of options.

Conversational prompts reveal high-intent needs: comparisons, eligibility, pricing, process, location, and “best fit” questions.

AEO expands visibility among people who may never use a traditional keyword query.

| AEO Signal           | What It Means in Practice                                                           |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Crawler Access       | AI crawlers can fetch public content without robots.txt, WAF/CDN, or gate conflicts |
| Extractable answers  | Direct answers, visible Q&A, steps, definitions, and comparison tables              |
| Entity clarity       | Clear business, service, location, credential, and person information               |
| Structured data      | Schema that labels key relationships for machines                                   |
| Trust anchors        | Credentials, original data, mentions, reviews, and authoritative references         |
| Citation measurement | Repeatable tests of actual brand citations (not theory)                             |

# SEO + AEO: One Integrated System

The strongest work improves both channels.

SEO measures rankings, impressions, clicks, and conversions. AEO measures answer inclusion, citations, and Share-of-Model.

| Shared Lever         | SEO Benefit                                   | AEO Benefit                                     | Integrated Action                                              |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| H1s & Headings       | Clarified Page Relevance                      | Helps parsers identify topic and answers        | One visible H1 plus logical H2–H4 hierarchy                    |
| Intent-led content   | Captures long-tail demand                     | Supplies quotable answers                       | Build answer-first pages around customer questions             |
| FAQ & Schema         | Long-tail relevance and rich-result support   | Identifies questions and answers clearly        | Visible FAQs with matching valid markup                        |
| Local/service schema | Improves entity understanding                 | Connects business, service, offer, and location | Deploy appropriate business, service, person, and offer schema |
| Speed & Rendering    | Improves user experience and crawl efficiency | Ensures source content is actually fetchable    | Improve LCP, INP, render-blocking assets, and JS-only gaps     |
| Authority signals    | Strengthens ranking competitiveness           | Builds confidence in source selection           | Earn links, mentions, reviews, and directory coverage          |

# How We Optimize For Both

Four connected workstreams turn diagnosis into measurable visibility gains.

## 1. Technical Visibility Foundation

Crawl and indexation diagnostics; sitemap, robots.txt, canonical, and redirect review; raw HTML vs. rendered DOM; Core Web Vitals; WAF/CDN and AI-bot testing; mobile and semantic HTML hygiene.

## 2. Content and Query Strategy

Research query demand and customer questions; cluster topics; map intent to pages; identify question gaps; create answer-first briefs with structure, proof, links, schema, and CTA requirements.

## 3. Entity, Schema, and Trust Architecture

Map business, service, audience, location, person, credentials, offers, and proof. Plan structured data, authorship, local citations, reviews, PR, unlinked mentions, and identity disambiguation.

## 4. Measurement and Iteration

Set GSC/GA4 baselines; score legacy SEO and AEO; test citations; benchmark competitors; sequence work over 30, 60, and 90 days; then re-test access, schema, indexation, speed, and visibility.

# Content and Query Strategy

From search demand to an answerable content system.

| # | Step                          | What We Do                                                                                               | Deliverable                        |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Business + audience discovery | Define services, markets, differentiators, sales cycle, conversion actions, and constraints              | Strategy brief and success metrics |
| 2 | Query universe research       | Gather keyword, question, local, comparison, pricing, process, alternative, and problem/solution queries | Segmented query universe           |
| 3 | Intent classification         | Classify informational, commercial, transactional, local, navigational, and support intent               | Intent map                         |
| 4 | Topic clustering              | Group semantically related queries into hubs and pages—not one page per keyword                          | Topic-cluster architecture         |
| 5 | Competitive gap analysis      | Review ranking and cited competitors, formats, entity signals, and unanswered questions                  | Opportunity matrix                 |
| 6 | Page-to-query mapping         | Assign primary intent, supporting queries, conversion goal, and link role to each URL                    | Content map and URL roadmap        |
| 7 | Answer-first briefs           | Specify H1, headings, direct answers, proof, FAQs, schema, links, media, and CTA                         | Production-ready briefs            |
| 8 | Publish, Measure, Refine      | Monitor performance and close observed gaps through updates                                              | Quarterly optimization queue       |

# Brief Audit Methodology

A disciplined audit of performance, access, understanding, and authority.

## 1. Unified SEO + AEO Scoring

Weighted rubric across legacy SEO and six AEO categories. A default 50/50 combined index exposes sites that are technically healthy but invisible to AI answer engines.

## 2. Crawler Reality Check

Robots.txt policy is not enough. We test live AI-bot fetches, raw vs. rendered HTML, logs where available, and indexation ground truth.

## 3. AI Citation Baseline

A controlled prompt battery measures whether the client is cited, mentioned, and accurately summarized—and which competitors are selected instead.

| Crawler Check              | Validation Question                                       | Evidence Collected                                               |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Live AI-bot fetch       | Do representative AI user agents receive usable content?  | HTTP status, response size, content comparison, WAF/CDN behavior |
| B. Raw vs. rendered HTML   | Are H1s, critical content, and JSON-LD in source HTML?    | Source/DOM difference                                            |
| C. Server/CDN logs         | Are allowed verified bots visiting with strong 2xx rates? | Logs and bot-validation evidence                                 |
| D. Indexation ground truth | Are priority URLs indexed and represented correctly?      | GSC Pages/URL Inspection plus site-search screening              |

# What We Audit

Coverage across the full organic visibility stack.

| Audit Area                   | Examples of Findings                                                                    | Typical Business Risk                                    |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Crawlability & Indexation    | Blocked pages, missing sitemaps, 4xx/5xx, duplicate URLs, weak canonicals, orphan pages | Priority pages cannot rank or attract traffic            |
| Rendering & Performance      | JavaScript-only content, slow LCP, poor INP, layout shift, heavy scripts                | Reduced rankings, crawl reliability, and conversion rate |
| On-page & Semantic Structure | Missing H1s, unclear headings, weak metadata, generic anchors, no alt text              | Pages are less understandable to people and machines     |
| Content & Query Coverage     | Intent gaps, thin pages, missing comparisons, pricing/process gaps, stale content       | Lost demand and weak answer extraction                   |
| Schema & Entity Signals      | Incomplete business, service, person, offer, FAQ, article, review, breadcrumb markup    | Weak machine-readable understanding                      |
| AI Crawler Access            | Robots.txt ambiguity, crawl delay, WAF blocks, policy/reality mismatch                  | AI platforms cannot reliably retrieve content            |
| Trust & Authority            | Weak authorship, credentials, links, reviews, mentions, and citations                   | Lower confidence and citation likelihood                 |
| Competitive Visibility       | Competitors rank or are cited more often for target intent                              | Share of qualified demand shifts to alternatives         |

# Audit Results Overview

Clear evidence, clear priorities, and a practical operating plan.

| Deliverable                     | What the Client Receives                                                      | Decision Value                                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Executive Summary               | 3–7 highest-impact findings tied to visibility, revenue, and risk             | Leadership alignment                                   |
| Master Severity Table           | Issues classified by technical severity, business impact, and P1–P5 priority  | Focuses investment on highest-return work              |
| Unified Scorecard               | Legacy SEO score, AEO score, combined index, category scores, competitor view | Shows where technical health and AI visibility diverge |
| Query & Content Opportunity Map | Topic clusters, intent segments, page gaps, recommended content types         | Turns demand into a content roadmap                    |
| AI Citation Baseline            | Prompt-level client and competitor citation evidence                          | Measures real answer-engine visibility                 |
| Technical Remediation Queue     | Developer requirements, acceptance criteria, templates, validation            | Makes implementation executable                        |
| 90 Day Roadmap                  | Tasks, owners, estimated hours, expected impact, and re-test dates            | Supports budgeting and accountability                  |

# How Results Are Presented

Illustrative format only. Final scores and findings are based on live client evidence.

| Dimension        | Illustrative Score   | What the Score Indicates                                                   | Example Action                                                            |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legacy SEO       | 63%                  | A workable foundation with material technical, content, and authority gaps | Resolve indexation, performance, and linking issues                       |
| AEO              | 37%                  | Not yet structures or validated for reliable AI retrieval and citation     | Improve crawler access, schema/entity coverage, answer content, and trust |
| Combined Index   | 50%                  | Traditional health can mask AI-search invisibility                         | Prioritize cross-channel fixes that improve both systems                  |
| AI Citation Rate | 0% in tested prompts | The brand is not appearing as a cited source in the measured set           | Build answer assets, validate access, and strengthen authority signals    |

## Common high-impact findings

Priority URLs are not consistently indexed, or duplicate/canonical signals dilute relevance.

Service pages lack precise topical, local, process, pricing, and FAQ information.

Robots.txt *appears* permissive, but a WAF (web application firewall)/CDN (content delivery network) returns 403 to AI crawler user agents.

Competitors are repeatedly cited while the client has little or no measured Share-of-Model.

# 90 Day Implementation Sequence

Move from diagnosis to verifiable progress.

| Phase      | Focus                 | Representative Work                                                                                                    | Primary Measurement/KPIs                          |
|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Days 0-15  | Remove Blockers       | Resolve indexation/canonical issues; repair critical links; confirm crawler policy; add H1s; address urgent CWV issues | Crawl health, indexation, live bot-fetch outcomes |
| Days 15-30 | Machine Understanding | Deploy priority schema; strengthen entity data; improve metadata and internal links; correct raw-HTML gaps             | Schema validation and scorecard lift              |
| Days 30-60 | Answerable Content    | Publish/upscale service pages, FAQs, comparisons, local pages, and process guides from query briefs                    | Impressions, query coverage, engagement           |
| Days 45-75 | Authority Building    | Improve GBP/citations; claim mentions; earn links; add proof, reviews, credentials, and original insight               | Referring domains, local signals, branded search  |
| Days 60-90 | Validate & Iterate    | Re-run citation battery, Crawler Reality Check, CWV, GSC, and competitor comparison                                    | Citation share, Combined Index, conversions       |

# The Engagement Outcome

We turn a website into a discoverable, answerable, defensible growth asset.

## What the market asks

Keywords, conversational questions, local intent, comparisons, and buying triggers.

## What the website proves

Accessible pages, fast rendering, precise content, structured entities, expert credibility, and conversion paths.

## What systems can use

Crawlable HTML, semantic structure, reliable facts, schema, authoritative references, and measurable citation performance.

SEO gets the brand discovered. AEO helps make the brand the answer.