

Meta description

Browse our listings and find your dream job. **With over 326 accounting jobs to choose from in Houston, Texas, you'll be sure to find what you're seeking.**



Update meta description



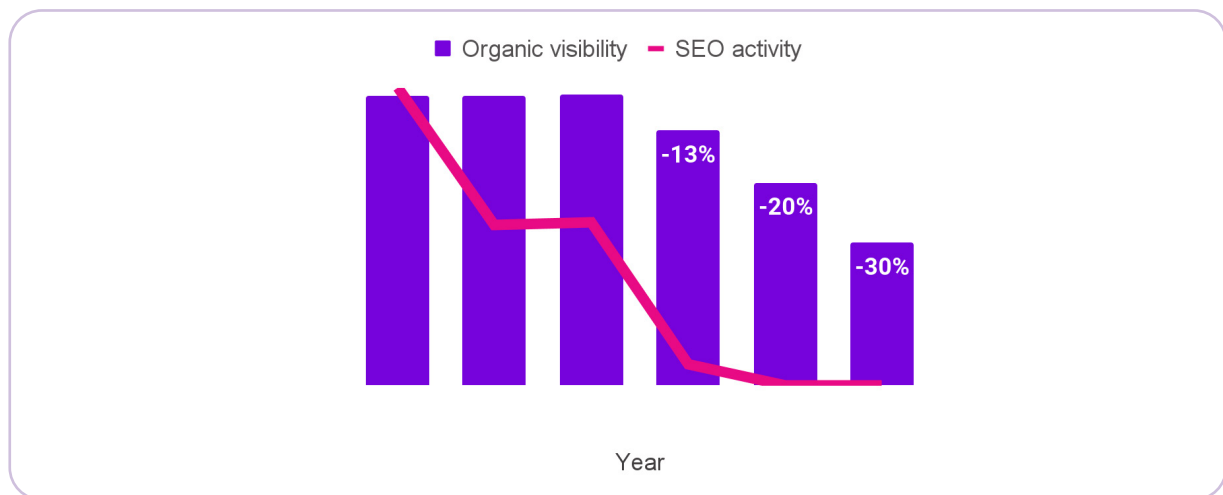
**The most important thing
leaders need to know
for SEO planning: your
performance will decline
if you do nothing**

We have new data showing that many marketing leaders are wrong about a key assumption they make when setting targets and planning SEO.

In dozens of conversations with teams at a wide range of companies, I kept hearing something surprising. Many told me that their plans assumed that if they did nothing, their organic traffic would be flat year over year. Sometimes, they had written it down like that, and other times, you had to read between the lines to realise that was what they were saying.

Over the years, I have seen a number of teams get judged based on the growth they have driven, calculating their ROI by comparing growth to spending. If you're doing either of these things, our data shows you are making a mistake.

SEO depreciation



When you pay to run adverts, for example, you pay for each click. When you stop paying, you stop getting clicks.

SEO doesn't work like that. You rank for some queries, you do some work to improve your website, and you hope to do better than you were doing before. When you stop improving your website, you don't immediately stop being visible in organic searches, and you don't expect to stop getting organic clicks right away.

It does seem reasonable, however, to imagine that if you stopped improving your website for years, you would gradually see some decline. You might start getting beaten by competitors, falling behind Google's latest changes, and see your performance decline, at least relative to your competition.

It makes sense to consider your SEO efforts more like an investment and your visibility in organic search as an asset. That asset gradually declines in value if you don't continue to invest. In other words, think of it depreciating over time. We have data to back this up.

For the first time, we gathered data from a number of businesses that we knew had stopped investing in SEO. We collected information about their performance in the years after they stopped investing. **We saw typical declines of 10-20% / year when they did nothing.**

How to model SEO performance

When setting SEO targets, deciding on the money and effort you want to spend on SEO, or figuring out the value of the work you've done on SEO, it's essential to build a model that starts with the assumption that if you did nothing, you would see a decline of 10-20% a year.

In general, you will still find that investing in SEO is one of the most efficient channels, but it's a mistake to think of it as free. You need to invest to maintain the asset at its current level.

Your team's effectiveness and spending should be judged against this baseline. The cost of the investment should be measured not against the status quo but against what would have happened if you had done nothing instead.

Measuring the true value of your SEO program

One of the challenges associated with traditional SEO methods is that it has been essentially impossible to tell whether an activity was worthwhile. Whether you chose to measure business metrics like sales and conversions, web activity metrics like clicks and traffic, or SEO metrics like rankings and clickthrough rate, every single measurement would get complicated by the fact that alongside your changes, Google was also changing its algorithm, your competitors were working on their websites, and demand was changing with the time of year, the economy, and more.

This is why we developed a [new approach](#). When we make SEO changes, we implement them as controlled tests. This makes it easier to measure the value of each change and compare it to what would have happened if you hadn't made the change.

You can learn more about [SEO depreciation](#) on our website, or check out our webinar on [turning SEO into a performance channel for ecommerce](#) to go deeper on the topic.



Read more about how the new approach to SEO works in the real world, including the story of how M&S achieved 190% of their annual SEO target in just 3 months, and [get in touch with SearchPilot](#) if you are interested in building or scaling an SEO experimentation program at your company.

Book a demo

