



SEO Agency Checklist

A practical checklist for evaluating an SEO agency before you hire.

How to use this checklist

Tick each item when you have evidence, a clear answer or confidence that the requirement has been met.
Use the scorecard later to compare agencies consistently.

1. Clarify your goals

- ☐ I have defined my primary goal for SEO, such as more local leads, more demo requests or more online bookings.
- ☐ I know which KPIs matter to my business.
- ☐ I know my current baseline for organic traffic, leads, calls, bookings or revenue where available.
- ☐ I have a realistic target for what I want SEO to contribute over time.

2. Understand your current situation

- ☐ I know approximately how much organic traffic my website receives.
- ☐ I know which pages currently generate the most organic traffic or enquiries.
- ☐ I know about any major technical, indexing, mobile or performance issues affecting the website.
- ☐ I know whether previous SEO work may have created problems or left important work unfinished.
- ☐ I can provide appropriate access to Google Analytics, Google Search Console, Google Business Profile if relevant, and the website CMS.

My current SEO notes

3. Evaluate the agency's capabilities

- ☐ The agency asks detailed questions about my business, customers, market and goals, rather than only asking which keywords I want to rank for.
- ☐ The agency explains its process clearly and does not rely on vague or secret methods.
- ☐ The agency can show relevant case studies, examples or evidence of previous work.
- ☐ The agency covers the areas relevant to my business, including technical SEO, on page SEO, content and measurement.
- ☐ The agency can provide Local SEO if my business depends on local customers.
- ☐ The agency explains how it approaches authority building and link earning safely and transparently.
- ☐ The agency can discuss AI search visibility if that is relevant to my business.

4. Questions to ask every SEO agency

- ☐ How will you learn my business and define success?
- ☐ What will the first 90 days look like?
- ☐ What specific work will you do in months 1 to 3, 4 to 6 and 6 to 12?
- ☐ How do you decide what to fix or build first?
- ☐ How will you measure and report business outcomes, not just rankings?
- ☐ What access and resources will you need from me?
- ☐ How will you handle technical SEO issues on my website platform?
- ☐ How do you approach link building and authority without creating unnecessary risk?
- ☐ What happens if I need to pause or end the engagement?
- ☐ Who will actually work on my account, and how will we communicate?

Notes from agency conversations

5. Red flags to watch for

- ☐ Be cautious if the agency guarantees number one rankings in Google.
- ☐ Be cautious if the agency claims to use secret methods it will not explain.
- ☐ Be cautious if the agency cannot show relevant examples, case studies or references.
- ☐ Be cautious if there is no clear reporting plan or agreed KPIs.
- ☐ Be cautious if the agency does not ask about my business goals or revenue model.
- ☐ Be cautious if the agency pushes a large upfront payment with a long, rigid contract without clear deliverables.
- ☐ Be cautious if the proposed strategy relies on mass low quality links or automated content at scale.

6. Commercials and contract basics

- ☐ I understand the agency's pricing model: retainer, project, performance or hybrid.
- ☐ I know exactly what is included in the proposed scope.
- ☐ I know what is not included, such as major development work or large content volumes.
- ☐ Contract length, renewal terms and notice period are clear.
- ☐ Ownership of content, assets, reports and other deliverables is clear.
- ☐ There is a clear process for changes, additional work or pausing the engagement.

7. Decision and fit

- ☐ The agency has demonstrated that it understands my business and market.
- ☐ I understand what the agency is proposing and why the work matters.
- ☐ The agency has set realistic expectations rather than promising instant results.
- ☐ I can see a credible connection between the proposed work and my business outcomes.
- ☐ I understand who will be responsible for the work and how communication will work.

Final comparison notes

8. Agency scorecard

Rate each agency from 1 to 5. Select one rating per row. The total updates automatically.

Evaluation area	1	2	3	4	5	Notes
Understanding of my business	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Clarity of strategy and process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Relevant experience and evidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Reporting and measurement approach	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Communication and responsiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Commercials and contract clarity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Total score

Maximum: 30

Decision notes

Strengths

Concerns

Final decision

Additional notes