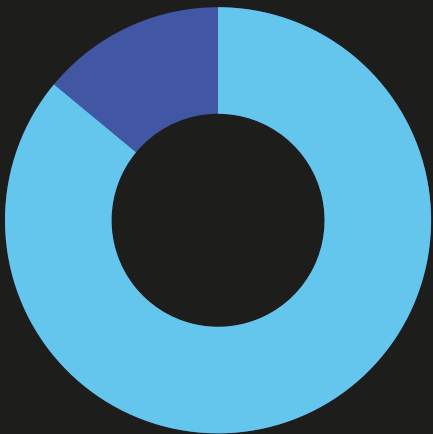


Plug & Play



Recruitment Agency Website & SEO Performance Benchmark Report.



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1.

Introduction

With 23,101 recruitment agencies operating in the UK, the recruitment market is extremely competitive. Not all agencies are a household name, and an agency's success can ride or die on their visibility and ability to be found; especially by clients and candidates that may not know them by name.

With this in mind, a website is a critical tool in the arsenal of every recruitment agency's marketing strategy. Despite the saturated landscape, our research shows that recruitment agency marketing is typically not performing at the level of other markets when it comes to Search Engine Optimisation. As such, there is a huge opportunity for agencies to get ahead of their competitors by strategically investing in their website and marketing.

Our research shows that doing the SEO basics right may be all that's needed for you to be found in search engines, outperform your peers, win more clients and place more candidates.

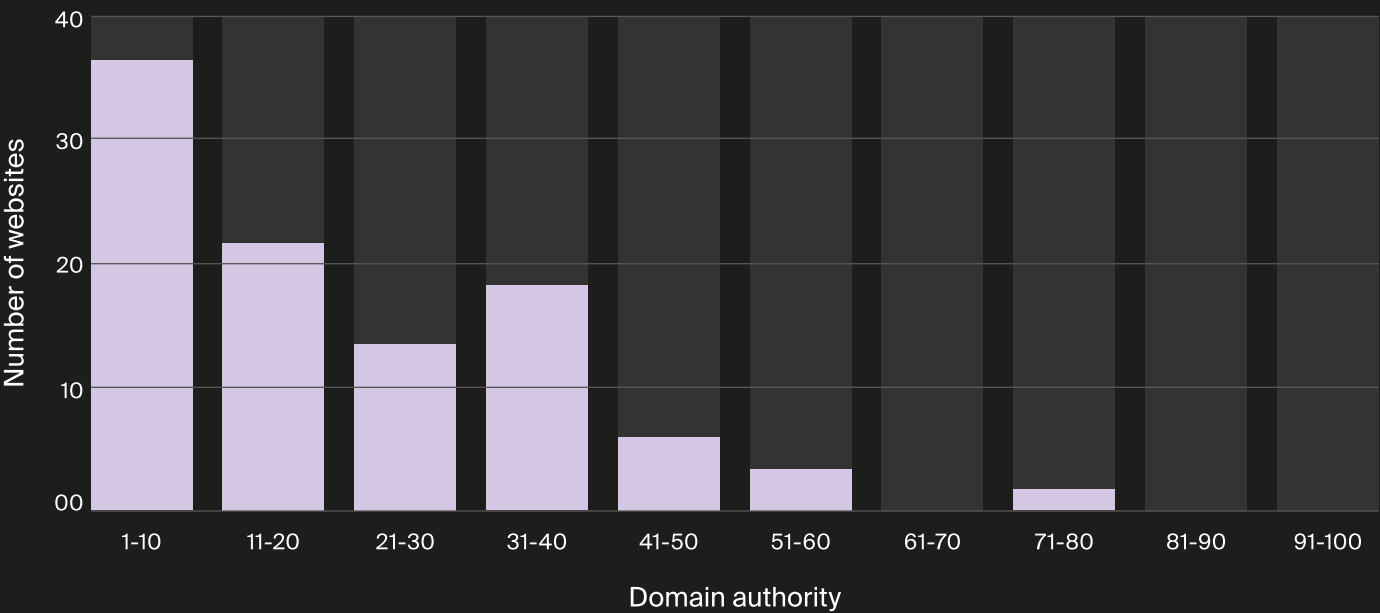
This report reviews 101 recruitment agency websites to benchmark what the industry is doing well and what agencies can do to lead the pack.

We invite agencies to use our report to benchmark their own performance and identify the opportunities they have to lead their section of the market.

How competitive is your site compared to other recruitment agencies?

Domain authority (DA) is a score provided by Moz that tells us how likely a website is to rank in search engines compared to competitors. The scores range from 1-100 where 1 is the lowest score and 100 is the top score. The higher the score, the more likely you are to rank. If you have a higher domain authority than your competitors, you are likely to have an opportunity to outperform them in search engines.

Domain authority distribution of recruitment websites



The domain authority of recruitment sites follows a relatively predictable curve that you would expect to see in any cross section of websites.

The large number of sites with a domain authority of 1-10 suggests that many of these sites are small or relatively new businesses. These agencies need to take a strategic approach to their SEO, looking for highly targeted keywords that they can rank well for in search engines.

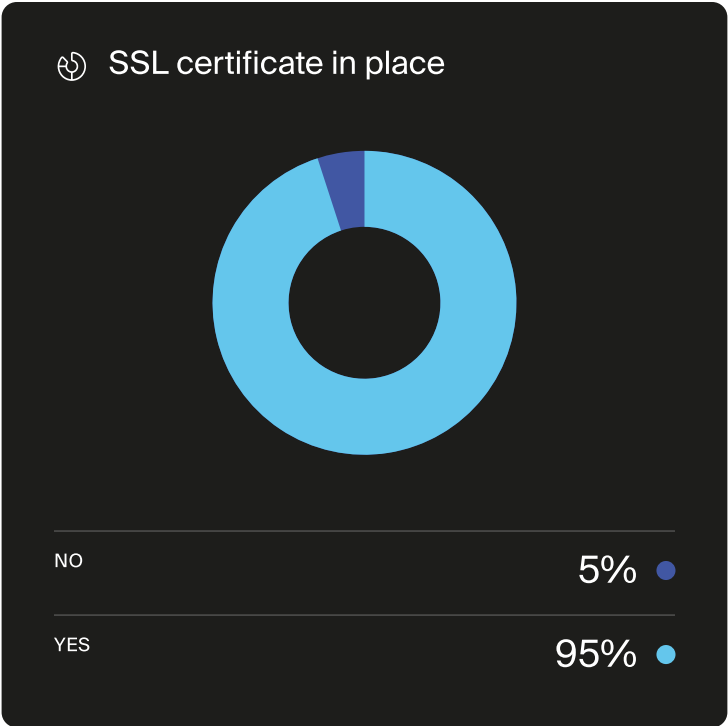
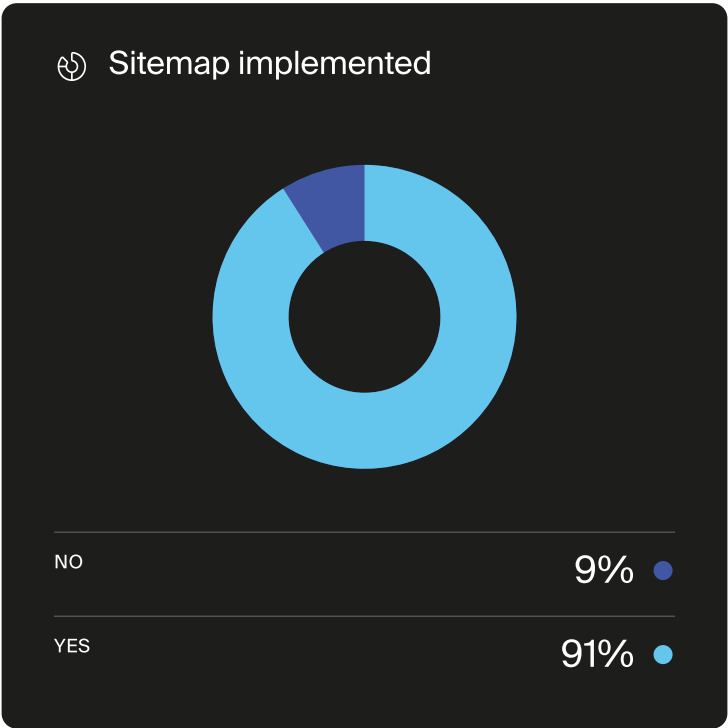
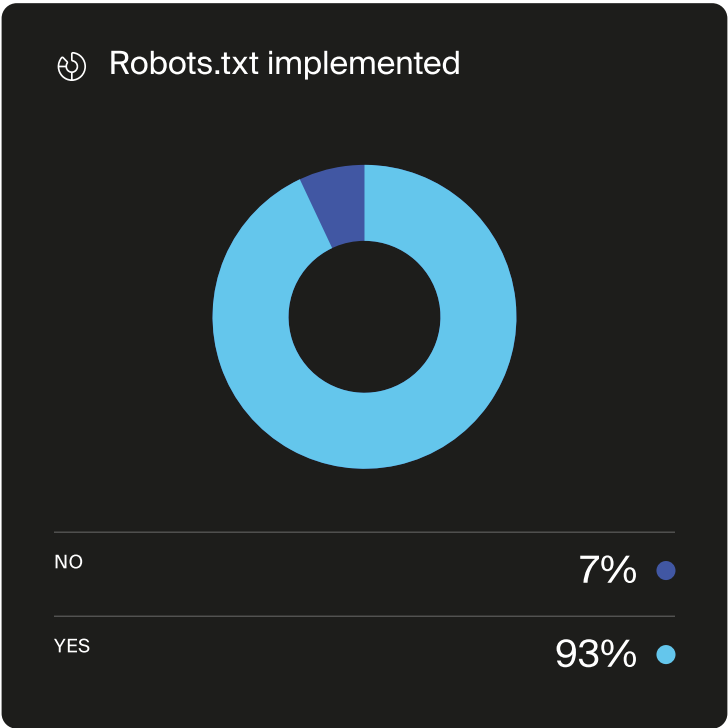
There is a healthy number of sites between the 20-40 DA ranges which is where you can be competitive for a broader set of keywords with SEO actions.

Sites that have a DA of 70+ are almost “too big to fail” and are unlikely to need to follow the rules of SEO to be successful. Many smaller agencies look to what larger agencies are doing in their marketing, and this can lead to suboptimal campaigns that have limited impact.

3.

Technical SEO optimisation

A robots.txt and XML sitemap file are often included by default as part of a modern website deployment. Not having these can be a significant black mark against your site when trying to gain search engine rankings. At present, the recruitment sector is generally good at implementing the robots.txt and XML sitemap, however there are still a few sites that omit them.



SSL certificates

The presence of an SSL certificate is becoming an expectation for sites that want to perform in search engines, with Google now penalising websites that do not have one in place. Of the sites reviewed in our research, 5% did not have an SSL in place.

4.

On page SEO elements

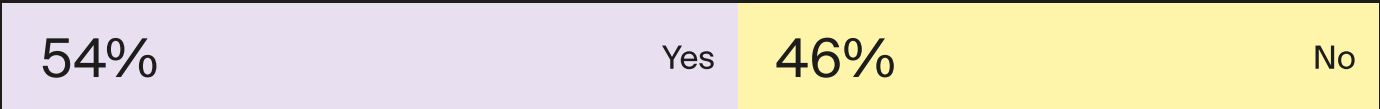
One of the most basic things that can be done to improve your SEO optimisation is to produce optimised page titles, meta descriptions and h tags on every page of your website.

Looking at the homepages of the recruitment agency sites we reviewed, we see a fairly even split of those that have and haven't optimised their titles and descriptions.

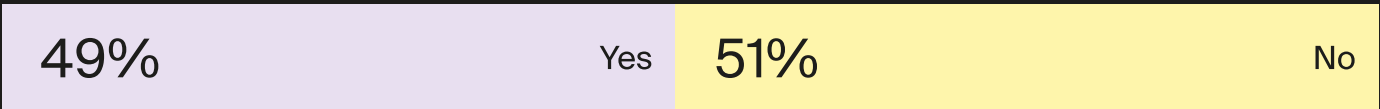
Optimised titles for this purpose are defined as between 30-70 characters long and include a keyword that is either "recruitment" or another prominent recruitment term. Optimised descriptions are defined as being between 100-170 characters long.

Sites with optimised titles and meta descriptions

Optimised page title



Optimised meta description



4.1

Page titles and meta descriptions

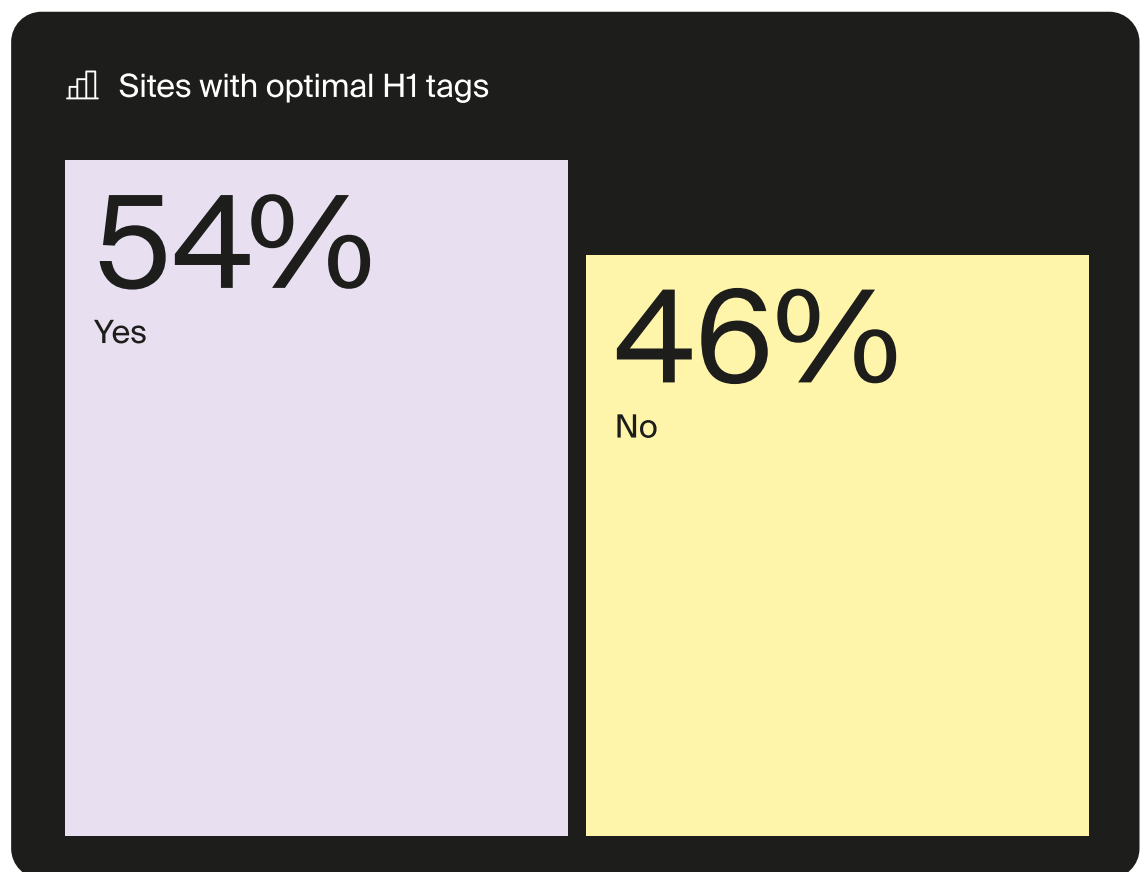
Although one of the simplest SEO actions, creating optimised meta descriptions and titles is also one of the most effective ways to improve SEO rankings. For example, if you are on page 2 of Google for a keyword and are not currently being found by anybody, this change may be all that is needed to move into a page 1 position and start generating traffic.

The equal split of agencies with and without optimised titles and meta descriptions on their homepage demonstrates the opportunity available for agencies doing SEO well.

4.2

H1 tags

The presence of H1s on recruitment websites is also split down the middle. Optimal H1s are defined for these purposes as between 12-50 more characters, but in the majority of cases there simply was not an H1 present on the page.



H1 tags are fundamental to SEO performance and are the equivalent of including headings in a document. Over half of the agencies reviewed aren't ticking one of the easiest yet most effective factors that influence their ability to be found in search engines.

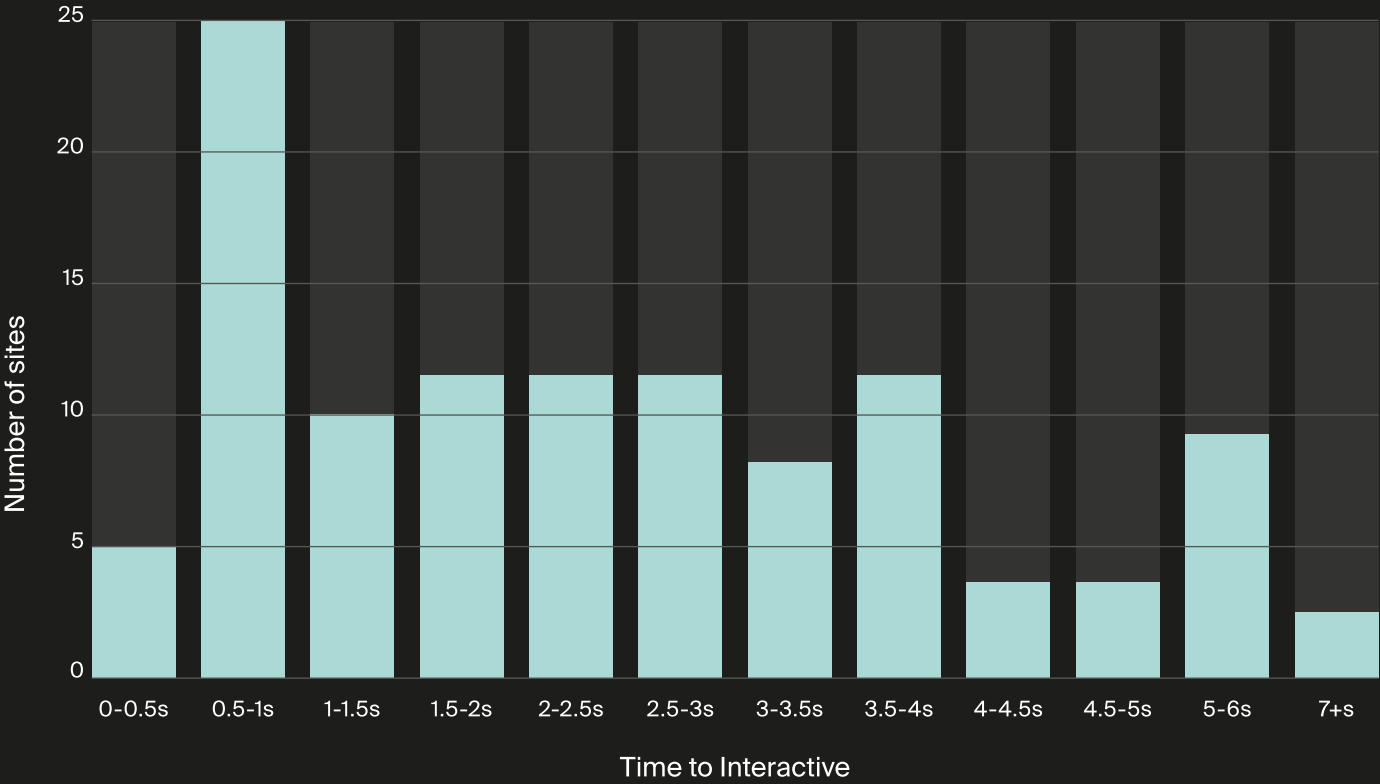
4.3

Speed

Website speed has an influence on all aspects of website performance including SEO, conversion rate and the perception of your agency (if your website is slow and hard to use then users make inferences about the level of service provided).

The RAIL Model recommends that businesses should keep their website load times under 1 second for the best performance.

Number of sites vs time to interactive



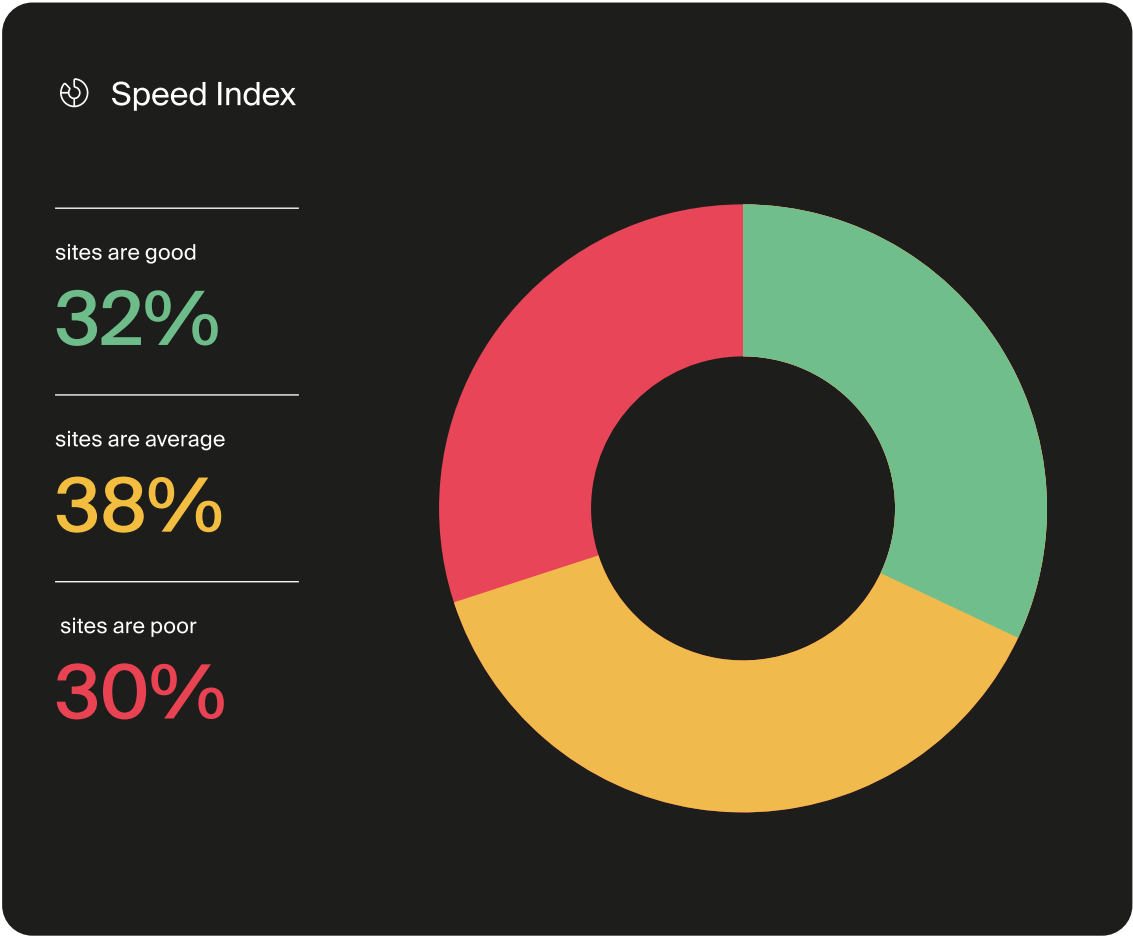
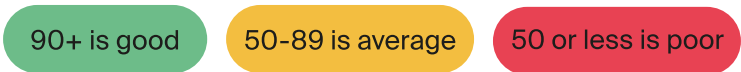
In our sample of sites, only 30% of recruitment agencies achieved a load time of under 1 second, meaning that 70% aren't meeting best practice speed guidelines.

70%

of recruitment websites don't meet best practice speed guidelines.

Google Speed Insights is a speed measure provided by Google to understand how your website is performing. As the leading search engine, using Google's own tool to measure performance is a great way to determine how their algorithm assesses your site when deciding where to rank it in the search results pages.

Google's classification of the scores.



The recruitment websites assessed are spread relatively evenly between the good, average and poor performance categories. Our research suggests that over 68% of recruitment sites can improve their SEO and conversion rate performance by improving website speed.

5.

Website analytics tracking

Whilst not a key ranking factor for SEO performance, the presence or absence of an analytics platform on the site can be indicative of how much attention an agency is paying to their website.

 Analytics in place

No

14%

Yes

86%



14%

of sites in this space do not have any obvious method of tracking site performance, suggesting that they are not undertaking any serious marketing effort.

6.

Who is doing it all?

When we look at the recruitment agencies that are doing the SEO basics right, the number is surprisingly low. Under 11% of the recruitment agency websites reviewed were doing SEO well.

 Proportion of recruitment agencies with basic SEO

89%

Not doing everything

11%

Doing everything

Only 11%

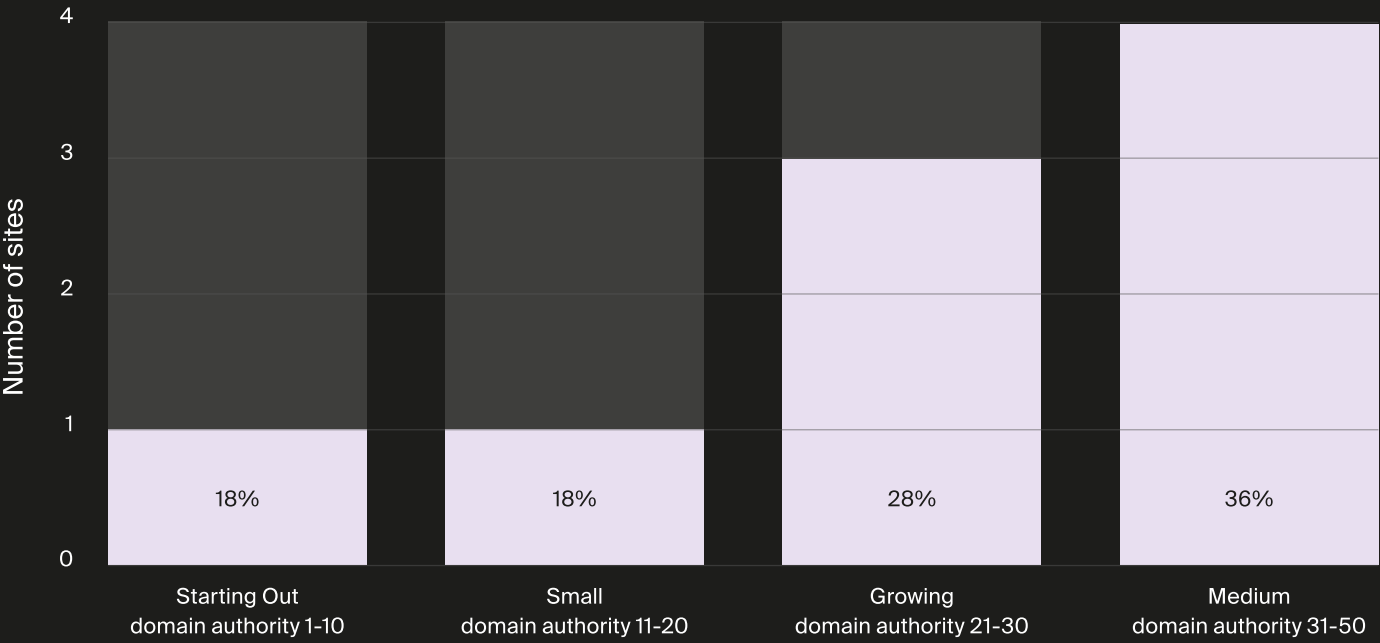
Of recruitment agencies are doing the basics of SEO well

The opportunity for recruitment agencies to lead their market, gain visibility and attract new clients in search engines is huge. It doesn't take a lot to outperform competitors.

7.

Does size matter in SEO?

How big are the websites that are doing SEO well?



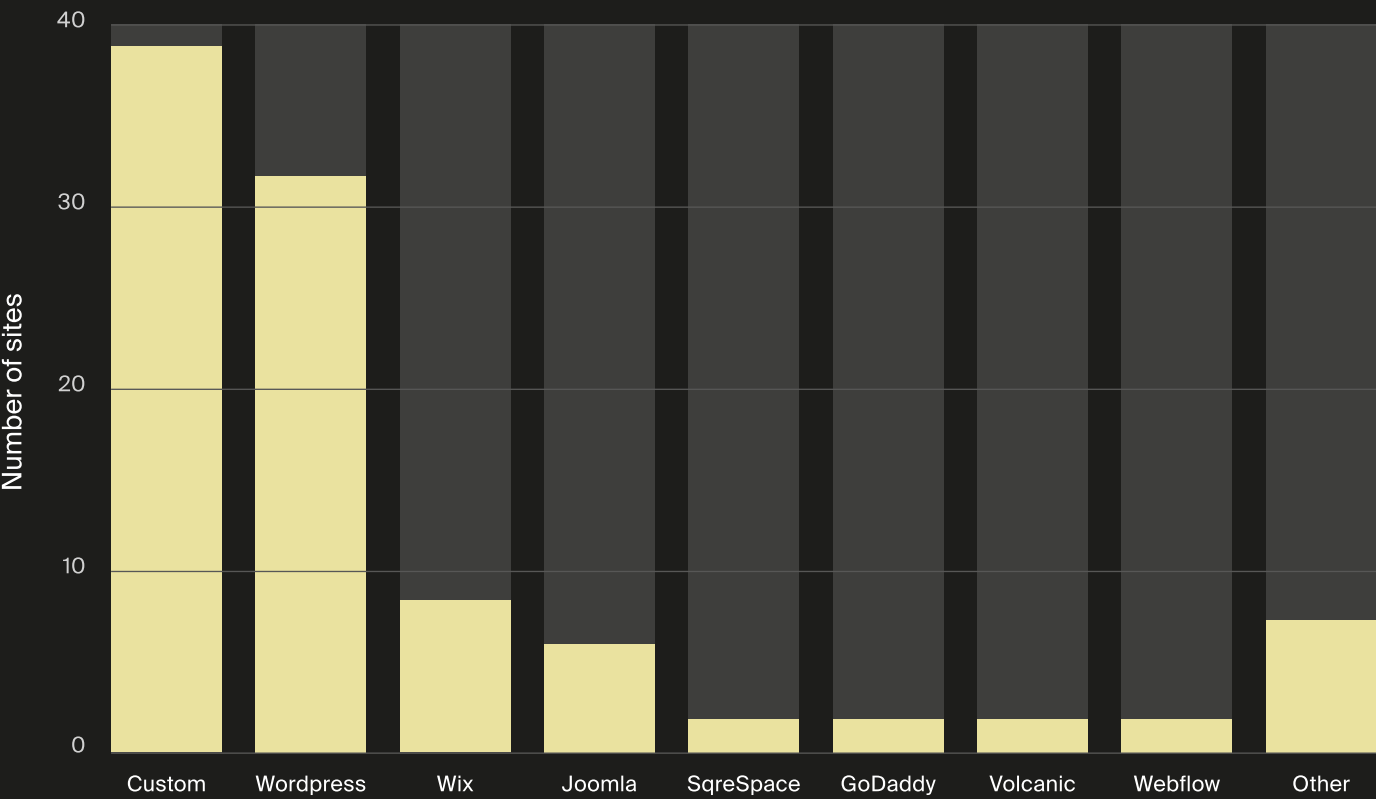
Of the 11% of sites that are doing the SEO basics, none are in the larger sites category. This is definitely a pattern we see across multiple different sectors. Once sites reach a certain size, they no longer have to pay attention to SEO best practice; their sheer size and footprint enables them to perform well without much effort. Larger sites tend to compete based on their on-site user experience and conversion rate rather than their discoverability.

However, our research shows that there is a lot of room for small to medium sized agencies with a domain authority of 1-50 to gain a competitive edge with very little effort. There is a significant opportunity to boost discoverability and performance.

8.

CMS selection

📊 CMS usage in recruitment websites



Custom and WordPress websites are the most popular within the recruitment industry. This is an interesting find, as these 2 CMS options offer quite different pros and cons for website performance, manageability and cost.

The data demonstrates that agencies using WordPress or a custom CMS are typically performing better for SEO.

82%

of the websites doing SEO well were on a WordPress or a custom CMS

9.

How to benchmark your agency

Domain authority

Moz offers 3 free domain searches a day so you can check your domain authority

moz.com/domain-analysis

Robots.txt

To check your robots.txt file, add /robots.txt to your domain. For example:

yourwebsitedomain.com/robots.txt

SSL

Websites with an SSL certificate will start with https:// rather than http:// and a padlock symbol will be visible in the URL bar. You should also check that the http:// version of your website redirects to the secure https:// version to prevent duplicate content issues.

Sitemap

Most sitemaps can be located by adding /sitemap.xml to your domain. For example at: yourwebsitedomain.com/sitemap.xml

If this doesn't work, try /sitemap_index.xml and /sitemap

If you can't find a sitemap at any of these URLs, it's likely that you don't have one in place. Speak to your developer to make sure you get one set up on your website.

Meta descriptions, page titles and H1s

The browser extension called SEO Meta in 1 Click will show you the title, meta description and h tags for the page you are visiting on a website.

Yoast is also a great tool for agencies that use WordPress.

Speed

Google Speed Insights tool is a great tool to measure your website speed.

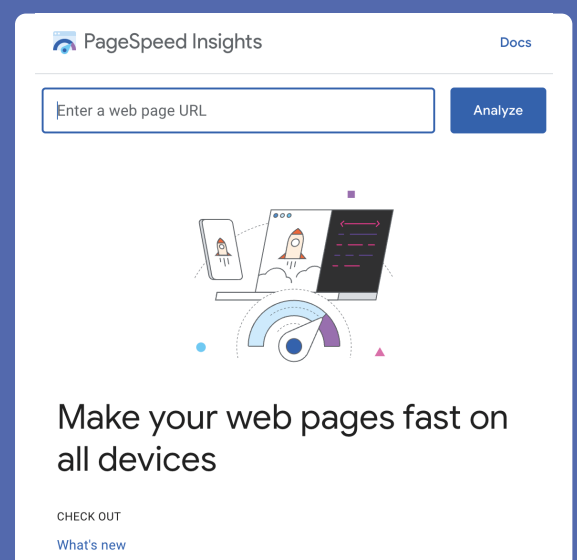
Remember that:

90+ is good

50-89 is average

50 or less is poor

To measure your time to interactive score, scroll to the performance report and you'll see this metric.



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