

# SEO Roles, Responsibilities, and Handoffs



Close the ownership gaps that make SEO work stall or vanish



SEO is judged on outcomes it cannot control alone



Results depend on well-designed handoffs, not one hero owner



Cover the role map, RACI, artifacts, and cadences



Goal: every recurring task has one accountable owner



# Why SEO Ownership Breaks Down



**Structural:** SEO sits between content, engineering, and product, reporting to none



**Incentive:** metric shielding — each team rewarded for its own KPI



**Accountability without authority:** SEO owns the KPI, not the systems



**Process gaps:** undocumented handoffs, verbal approvals, no shared definition of done



**Cost:** stale recommendations, unshipped tickets, recurring audits, structural debt



# Role Map Across the SEO Delivery Chain



# Ownership Models: Centralized, Embedded, and Hybrid

## Centralized



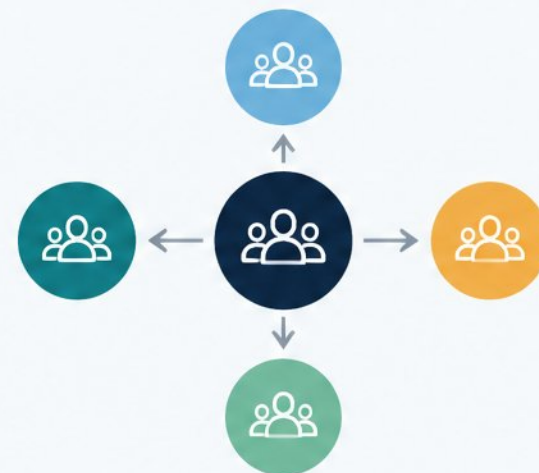
Centralized: one team serves all; consistent but a bottleneck risk

## Embedded



Embedded: specialists inside product teams; fast but fragmented standards

## Hub-and-Spoke



Hub-and-spoke: central strategy, distributed execution — most sustainable



**Reporting trade-offs:** marketing, product, or engineering — each has costs



**What matters most:** executive sponsor with real cross-functional authority



**Resourcing guide:** outsource under \$5M, hybrid \$5M–\$50M, in-house above \$50M

# Assigning Accountability with RACI

| Task               | Responsible (R)                                                                   | Accountable (A)                                                                   | Consulted (C)                                                                     | Informed (I)                                                                        |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Content publishing |  |  |  |  |
| Site migration     |  |  |  |  |
| Monthly reporting  |  |  |  |  |



RACI = Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed



Rule: exactly one accountable owner per task



Wait. That's a meta-rule not a RACI element. Let me redo.



Small teams: one person, multiple roles – still write it down



## Content publishing

editor accountable,  
SEO consulted,  
analytics informed



## Site migration

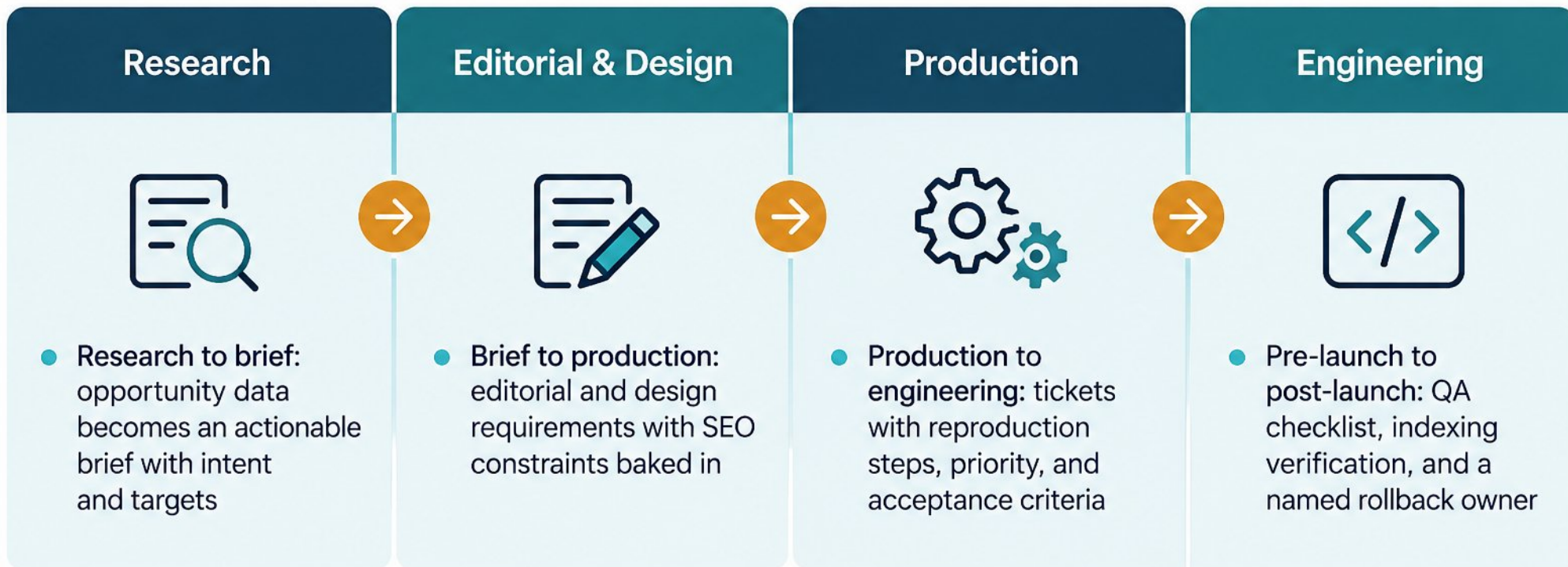
SEO lead accountable  
for redirect and  
indexation integrity



## Monthly reporting

analytics accountable,  
SEO lead consulted,  
leadership informed

# Handoff Points in the SEO Workflow



Reporting flows back into prioritization and the next planning round



Every handoff needs four things: an owner, an artifact, a deadline, and a definition of done

# Handoff Artifacts: Briefs, Tickets, and Launch Checklists

Clear artifacts. Smoother handoffs. Stronger SEO outcomes.



## Content brief

- Content brief: query, intent, SERP snapshot, outline, links, schema, CTA, measurement.



## Technical ticket

- Technical ticket: title, in-scope templates with example URLs, current vs. expected behavior, acceptance criteria.
- Add impact, dependencies, testing notes, and rollback ownership to every ticket.



## Launch checklist

- Launch checklist: redirects, canonicals, sitemap, robots, hreflang, rendered HTML, Core Web Vitals, monitoring.



- Define "done" per artifact, keep one version-controlled location, avoid chat-only SEO guidance.



Different  
expertise.  
Shared progress.

# Prioritization and Trade-offs for Handoffs



Impact-based SEO: fix what moves crawlability, indexation, and revenue pages



Score on impact, scope, confidence, effort; add cost of delay as tiebreaker



Impact-effort matrix: quick wins, strategic investments, fill-ins, traps refused



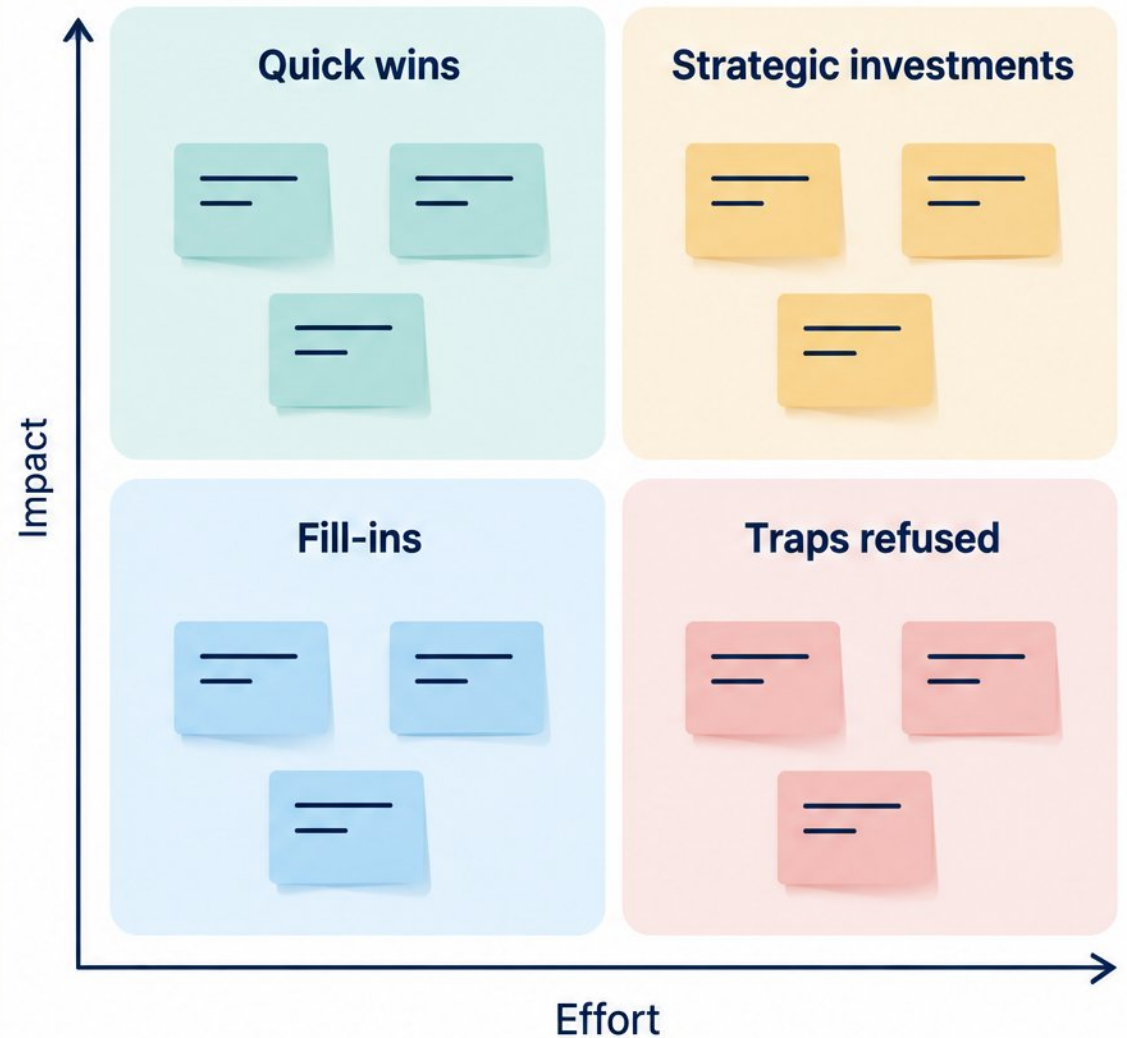
One problem per ticket; bundle only work touching the same template or build step



Label everything critical and engineers rank it themselves — prioritize honestly



Translate trade-offs into pipeline impact, revenue at risk, maintenance cost



# Collaboration Rituals and Cadences



## Weekly triage

- Weekly triage: score incoming issues, assign one owner



## Sprint and release planning

- Sprint and release planning: SEO enters as standing capacity



## Monthly review

- Monthly review: traffic, rankings, indexing, conversions together



## Quarterly planning

- Quarterly planning: strategy, budget, roadmap trade-offs aligned



## Agency-in-house sync

- Agency-in-house sync: expected reporting, scope, escalation contacts



## Meeting hygiene

- Meeting hygiene: decision log, named owners, deadlines, written rationale



# Escalation, Conflict Resolution, and Trade-offs



Escalate blocked dependencies, conflicting priorities, scope disputes, and urgent technical risks



Route by issue type: content, templates, roadmap, or budget—each has a named approver



Escalation moves an issue up one level; it should never make it disappear



Reframe trade-offs in business terms: revenue risk, UX, maintenance cost, velocity



When capacity is tight, negotiate standing sprint capacity and early SEO review



# Measuring Handoff Effectiveness



## Leading indicators

- handoff cycle time
- time to triage
- sprint acceptance
- rework
- QA pass rate



## Lagging indicators

- non-brand visibility
- indexation coverage
- rankings
- organic pipeline contribution



**Report in two layers:**  
workflow health vs.  
search outcomes—don't  
confuse productivity  
with impact



**Quarterly ownership audit:**  
every recurring task still  
has one named  
accountable owner



**Feedback loop:**  
capture failed handoffs,  
update role map, re-score  
backlog when SERPs or  
site change

# Common Failure Patterns to Avoid



Documentation theater: accountability without authority, and a RACI nobody follows



Guidelines treated as optional advice instead of enforceable standards in templates



Tools bought before operating rules, then the platform gets blamed



Bundling unrelated work into one ticket, blocking estimates and creating bottlenecks



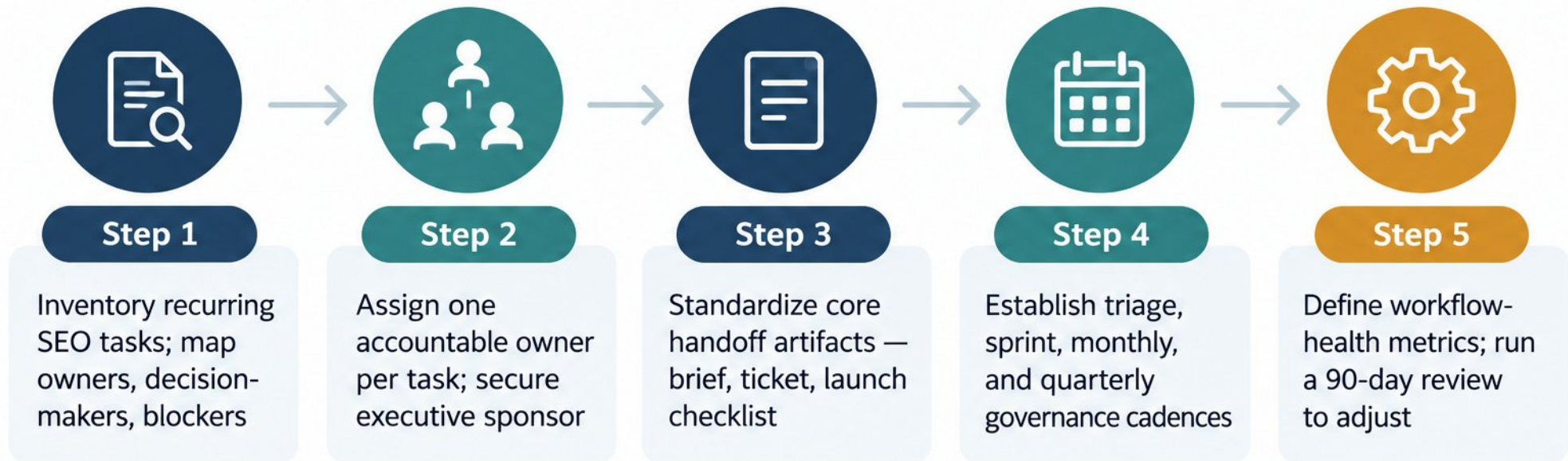
Everything marked urgent, or governance bypassed informally, eroding credibility



| RACI |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |  |  |
|      |  |  |  |  |
|      |  |  |  |  |
|      |  |  |  |  |
|      |  |  |  |  |



# Action Plan: Implementing Clear SEO Ownership



# PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform



Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

[personwise.ai/t/1d045d8d/public](https://personwise.ai/t/1d045d8d/public)