

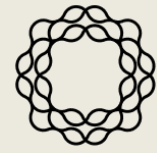
Omniscient

MEASURING ORGANIC GROWTH IN 2025



*New data on how AI is reshaping
metrics, attribution, and
confidence in organic growth*

By Omniscient Digital



Omniscient



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How Are Marketers Measuring Organic Growth in 2025? [New Research]

Measuring performance and ROI from organic channels has always been difficult, messy, and somewhat opaque.

With the advent of generative AI, it's getting even more challenging.

Marketers are in a transition period right now as AI engines restructure the search landscape. Some see it as business as usual. Some fear change. Some are jumping into [the new frontier with enthusiasm](#).

The progression of AI is just the latest dynamic force in organic growth, but we've seen change come in many forms over time.

First, there was the Search Era, where impressions, clicks, and last click conversions drew a linear picture of organic growth. Then, the Social Era gave rise to community-driven growth and [dark social](#). In the Platform Ecosystems Era, discovery came from new sources like video and voice search, fracturing the search landscape into multi-modal, multi-platform discovery. Each era before has come with confusion, frustration, and friction in having to change.

The AI Era is [quite possibly the most monumental shift yet](#) – reallocating the value of content, refactoring the customer journey, and changing how marketers must invest and measure their programs.

In this research, we wanted to learn how marketers are measuring their organic growth programs now and how that is changing in the face of AI search.

Marketers recognize the importance of value metrics and AI attribution but still default to vanity metrics and underreporting, creating a gap between confidence in tools and what leadership sees. While traditional metrics remain stable, true growth comes from moving up the AI attribution maturity curve, where more advanced organizations see stronger satisfaction and strategic success with GEO.

Executive Summary

Value > vanity metrics: Revenue, conversion rate, and pipeline are the top priorities – far above impressions, keyword rankings, or bounce rate.

But reporting lags: Only 31.8% tie organic growth to pipeline or revenue in stakeholder reporting; most still lead with traffic, branded term growth, ranks, and impressions.

Web analytics tools are most ubiquitous: Google Analytics is the most used tool for organic measurement; CRMs and marketing automation platforms trail far behind.

Attribution is complex, and AI makes it darker: Multi-touch/custom models are popular, but without AI visibility and self-reported attribution, teams misclassify LLM-influenced demand as “direct.”

Traditional SEO isn't dead: Contrary to the doomsday narrative, most teams report stable or increasing core SEO metrics – and trust in those metrics often holds or rises.

Control drives satisfaction: Satisfaction rises for teams who believe their input metrics are predictive of organic growth outcomes.

Satisfaction compounds with capability: As organizations strengthen their AI attribution and commitment to GEO, their satisfaction of their overall organic growth strategy grows.

Value Over Vanity: The North-Star Alignment

Which metrics actually matter?

People debate whether the numbers they report to leadership should reflect business impact or just make dashboards look impressive. Ultimately, the purpose of an organic growth program is to drive revenue, whether that be through direct conversions and pipeline impact, brand equity and awareness, or a platform through which you can educate the market on your product and point of view. Brands, historically, have lost the plot, opting for metrics that are easiest to measure (traffic, impressions) over metrics that best approximate purpose, value, and impact (pipeline, revenue, share of voice).

While metrics like traffic and impressions can signify value, they are often divorced from relevance and targeting, leading teams to enter what we call the “traffic trap” – an endless loop of chasing vanity metrics, which leads to misallocation of resources and efforts and, in many cases, illusory wins. The point of organic growth is not just to be seen; it’s to win mindshare, earn trust, and convert, putting revenue first and ensuring programs drive pipeline.

Across teams we surveyed, the market sentiment is reflecting this view: revenue, conversion rate, and pipeline now top the priority list, while impressions, keyword rankings, and bounce rate rank lowest.

We saw this trend in our [Marketing Leaders Report](#): the north star KPIs that directly show your business is increasing the bottom line are highly regarded, because they show a return on investment.

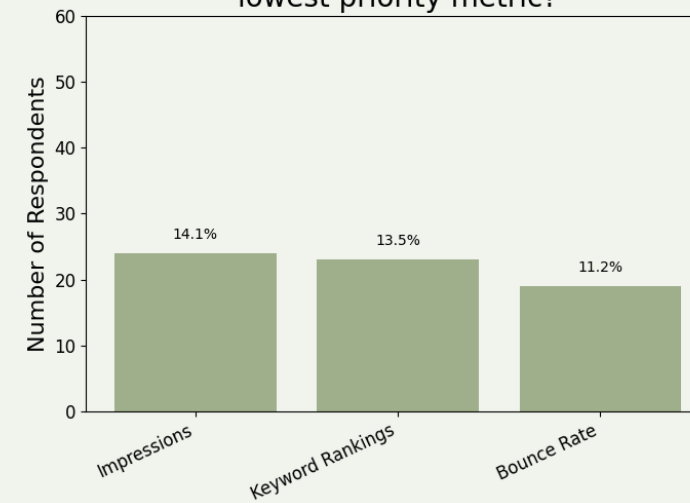
The logic is simple:

- Impressions hint at brand visibility, but they do not reflect belief or intent. While you might have people viewing your posts, it doesn’t mean that it’s meaningful brand awareness that leads to customer acquisition. They are not a leading indicator of brand perception, or how your customers trust your brand or its ability to deliver value. Examples abound, such as a SaaS company writing about “inspirational quotes” or “how to make the shrug emoji.” Traffic? Yes. Relevance? Nope.

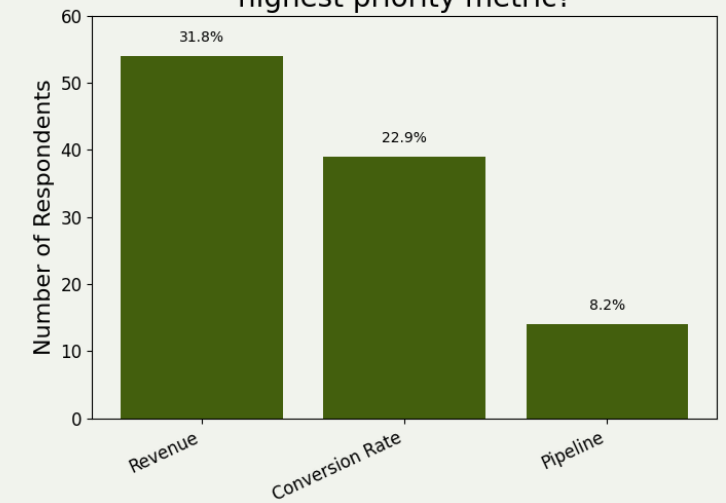
- Keyword rankings can offer directional progress if filtered through a lens of relevancy, but often fluctuate and cause teams to chase their tail, organizing efforts around micro-optimizations to keep points on the board instead of driving larger leap initiatives. They matter, (7.3% of respondents said it was still their highest priority metric), but only as a means to program level outcomes.
- Bounce rate is a commonly used metric that causes more confusion than clarity. It, alone, does not reveal if the visit is purposeful or an indicator of disinterest (or an inability to find valuable information on your site). The buyer journey is complex, and relying on a metric like this can skew outcomes.

Despite the recognition that value metrics should come first, too many teams are still spending time around numbers that do not move the business forward, reporting vanity metrics to stakeholders.

Which of the following is your lowest priority metric?

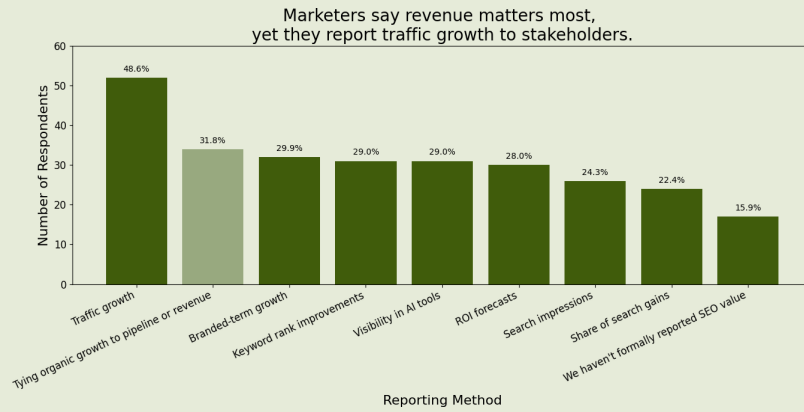


Which of the following is your highest priority metric?

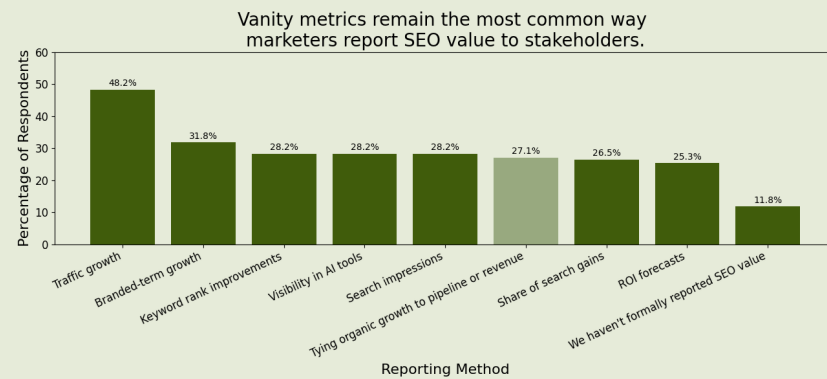


Marketers say they prioritize revenue and other value-based KPIs, yet their reporting habits tell a different story.

Among respondents who list revenue, conversion rate, or pipeline as their highest-priority metric, only about one-third (31.8%) actually report SEO performance to stakeholders in terms of revenue or pipeline.



Across the entire survey population, that share of respondents reporting pipeline and revenue growth drops further, to just 27.1%.



By contrast, nearly half of all respondents (48.2%) showcase traffic growth to stakeholders, and around one-third highlight branded-term growth or keyword rank improvements – traditional visibility metrics that don't directly prove business impact.

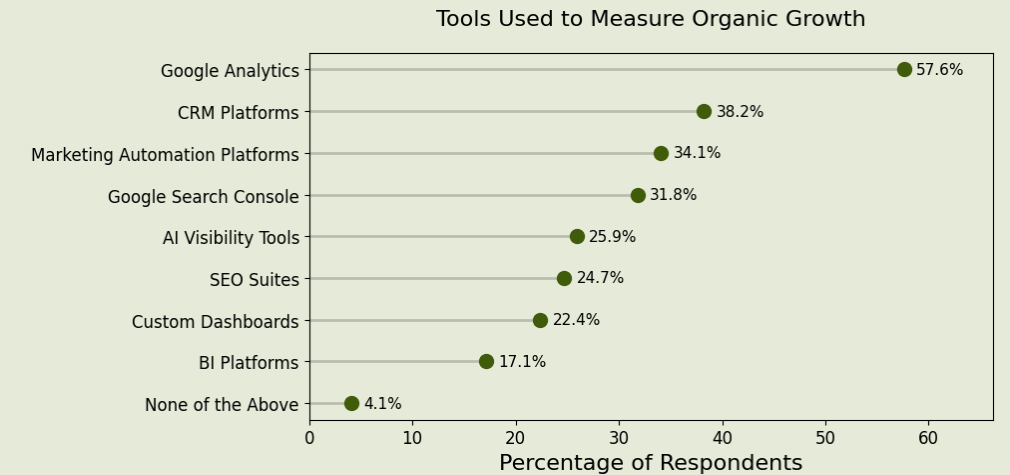
It's not unreasonable that marketers index on easily measured metrics like traffic growth and keyword rankings; attribution is hard, and it's getting harder.

Especially in complex B2B sales cycles and multi-step customer journeys, it's hard to get your telemetry right, let alone choose an attribution model that accurately reflects your customer journey.

However, it is our experience and belief that mapping your efforts as closely as possible to revenue as a KPI builds trust and allows for better decision making based on the data.

Part of the challenge is academic (which attribution model to choose), and part technical (setting up proper events and goals). But part of the challenge is also the tech stack and what it facilitates.

Teams use tools that track website behavior, not pipeline metrics.



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Part of the challenge is academic (which attribution model to choose), and part technical (setting up proper events and goals). But part of the challenge is also the tech stack and what it facilitates.

Teams use tools that track website behavior, not pipeline metrics.

Google Analytics is the most popular organic growth measurement tool, used by 57.6% of respondents.

This makes sense; Google Analytics has long been the dominant web analytics tool.

However, most Google Analytics setups are not built to track downstream behavior like qualified leads, pipeline growth, and revenue. Functionally, this makes it difficult to tie one's efforts to outcomes beyond a website conversion (and even that, in our experience, is often not set up correctly in GA4).

Out of those using Google Analytics, 40.1% are using GA on its own, meaning they are missing a key component of revenue and conversion tracking.

CRM platforms like Hubspot, Salesforce, and attribution platforms like Dreamdata, and Hockeystack, are purpose built to track and attribute revenue metrics. Yet only 38.2% of respondents are using these.



What Attribution Models Are Marketers Using?

Attribution is the credit assignment system that takes multiple touchpoints in the customer journey into the equation. It's [often a political debate](#) more than an intellectual one, but it's an important way to allocate resources and headcount, make decisions, and cut or double down on campaigns.

The most popular attribution model is multi-touch.

32.4% of respondents report they use a multi-touch attribution model, followed by 20.6% custom modeling and 18.2% first-touch attribution.

8.8% don't have an attribution model at all, and only 8.2% of respondents use last-touch attribution.

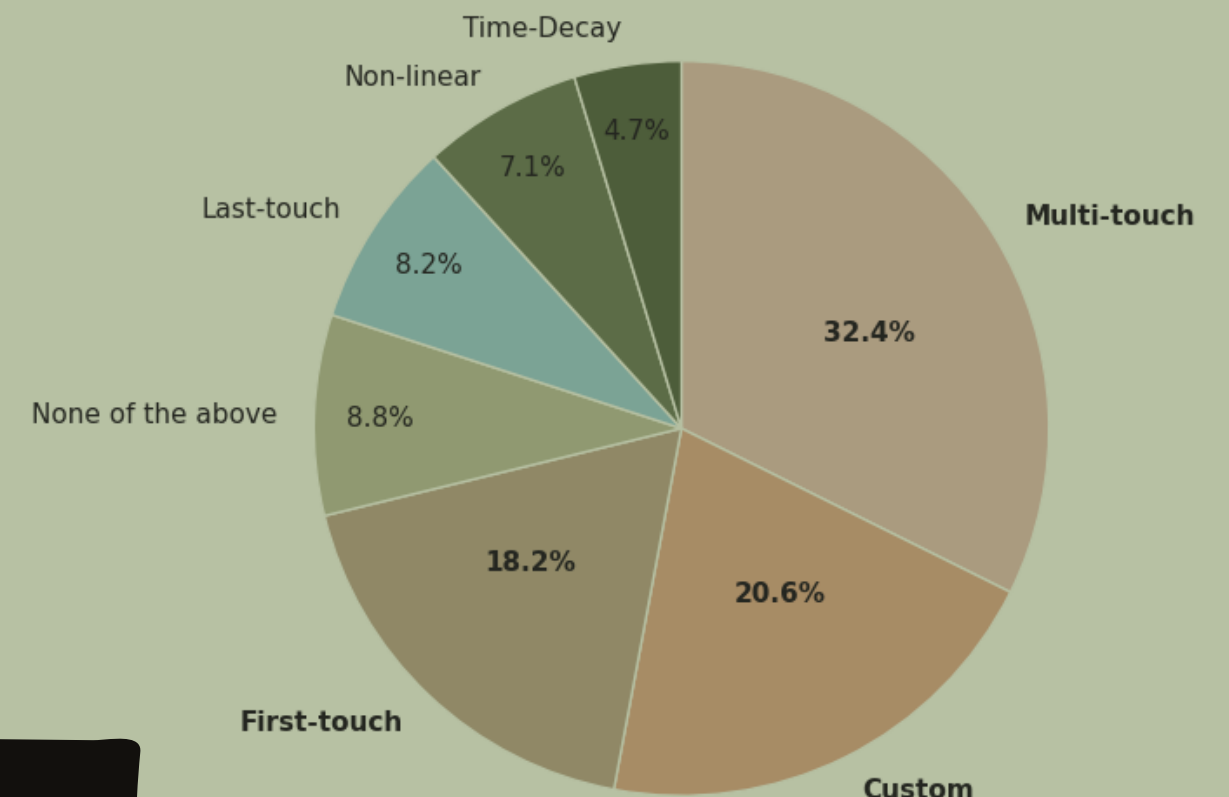
This is surprising, as our hypothesis would be that last-touch would be the most common response. Platforms like Google Analytics have historically

defaulted to the last non-direct click, and it's typically the easiest to understand and explain. It's also the closest to the money, so it's often favored by performance marketing teams.

One-touch models come with their cons: buyers rarely convert at a single touchpoint, so they bias either towards BOFU (last click) or TOFU (first click) efforts, and can misattribute "winning" channels. More complex multi-touch attribution models also have their challenges, but offer a nuanced look at multiple touches.

Multi-touch and custom models are often complex and work under the assumption that they see the entire buyer journey. However, AI introduces more untrackable touchpoints, with zero click answers being the default.

Distribution of Attribution Models Used



How Marketers are Attributing Organic Performance to AI Engines

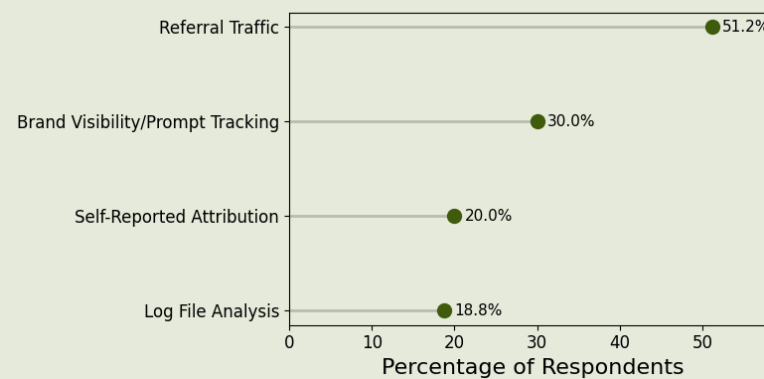
Out of our respondents, 20.1% are not currently measuring organic growth from AI sources.

Out of the marketers who do attribute AI influence today:

- 51.2% use referral traffic from web analytics
- 30.0% rely on brand visibility or prompt tracking
- 20.0% track self-reported attribution (e.g. "How did you hear about us?")
- 18.8% use log file analysis of LLM bot crawls



How Marketers Attribute Organic Performance to AI Engines

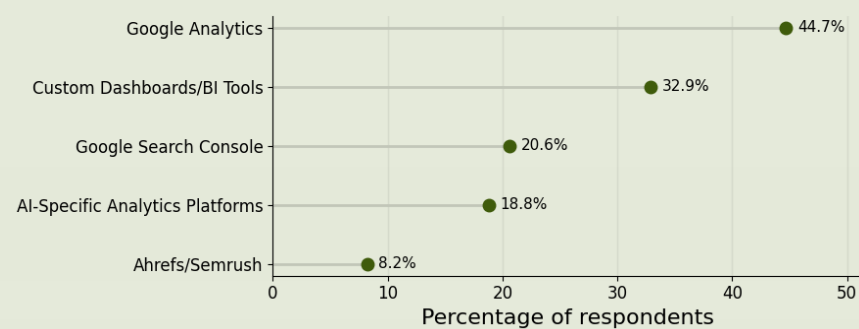


Tools Used to Measure Organic in AI

Tools in play:

- 44.7% use Google Analytics, which can track referral traffic, engagement, and conversions from LLMs
- 32.9% use custom dashboards/BI Tools
- 20.6% Google Search Console
- Only 18.8% use AI-specific analytics platforms like Peec AI or Profound that measure AI visibility beyond clicks
- 8.2% use Ahrefs or Semrush

Tools Used Measure Organic Performance in AI Engines



Resulting paradoxes:

- 81.5% feel at least moderately confident in their AI measurement, yet only 28.2% report AI visibility to stakeholders.
- 27.6% cite lack of tooling as a limiting factor to measure generative engine optimization performance.

AI Measurement Paradoxes		
81.5% Are at least moderately confident their current setup captures AI-driven organic growth accurately	28.2% Report AI visibility to stakeholders	27.6% Cite lack of tooling as limiting factor in their ability to measure GEO performance today

This presents a gap in marketers' current analytics approach and what is needed to measure visibility and influence in AI engines.

Classic analytics systems rely on clicks; answer engines don't often result in a click. Yet they still often influence a purchase decision.

Thus, we need prompt level tracking and visibility in addition to referral traffic and self-reported attribution to complete the picture. Perfect? No. But we're moving into an era with less clean, linear, and click-based attribution.

Marketers trust the numbers from tools that cannot capture the new reality. The result is underreporting AI visibility to stakeholders, misclassifying demand as "direct," and reinforcing low-intent metrics.

There is a large opportunity here for marketers to level up their organic growth reporting in AI surface areas.

And when it comes to organic performance in AI engines, we often feel fear or uncertainty. It doesn't help that many companies are seeing click-through-rate declines. However, that doesn't mean everything is unraveling. In fact, when we looked at traditional SEO metrics, the story was far more stable than the headlines would have you believe.



The Steady Ground of Traditional SEO

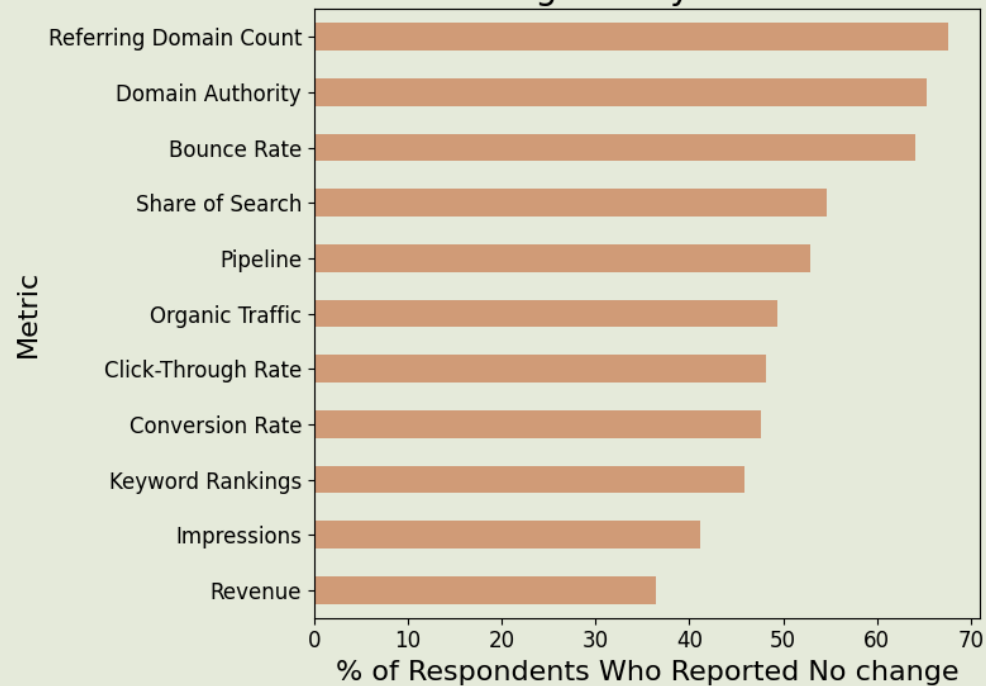
Across SEO circles, there's been growing concern about the impact of AI Overviews and other SERP changes on metrics. Multiple industry reports have pointed to a decline in organic click-through rates. For example, Ahrefs analyzed 300,000 keywords in Google Search Console, comparing 2025 data to the prior year, and reported a [34.5% drop in CTR attributed to AI Overviews](#).

To better understand this, we surveyed teams to compare their real-world experience with the patterns suggested in these industry reports.

Traditional SEO Metrics are Stable

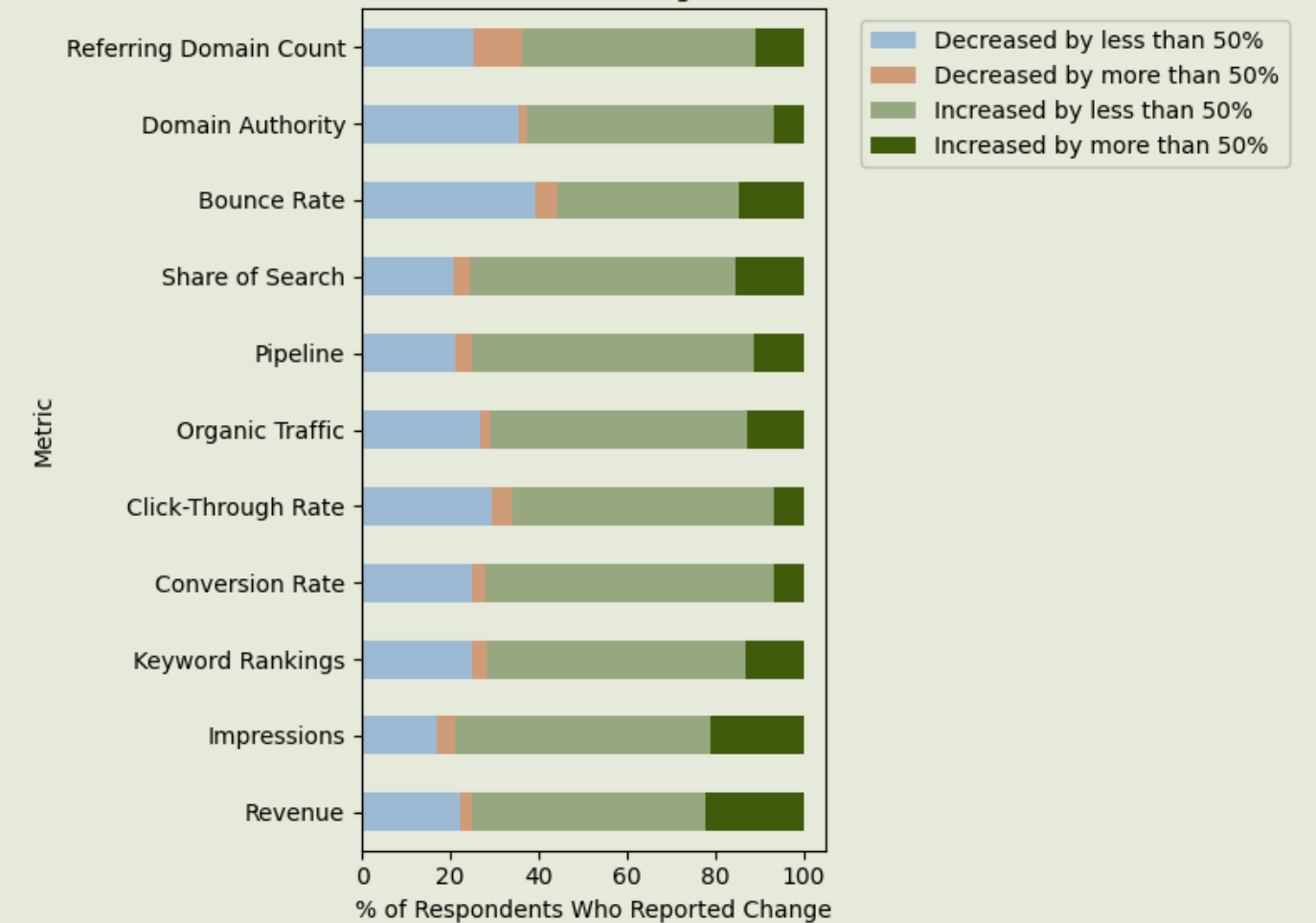
Among our respondents, across 11 common SEO metrics, 36.5%–67.6% report stability.

The SEO Metrics Holding Steady Amid the Rise of AI Search

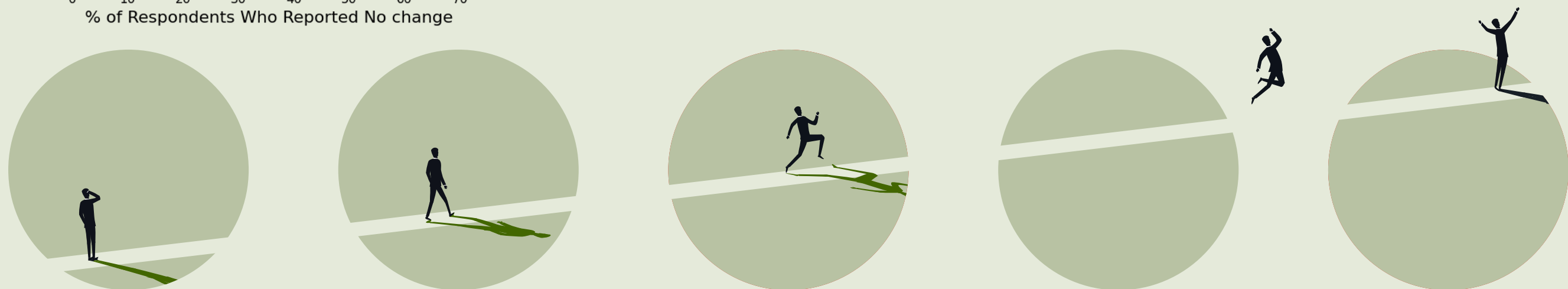


Where changes occur, more teams report increases over decreases – and declines are usually modest.

How Traditional SEO Metrics Have Changed with AI Search Features



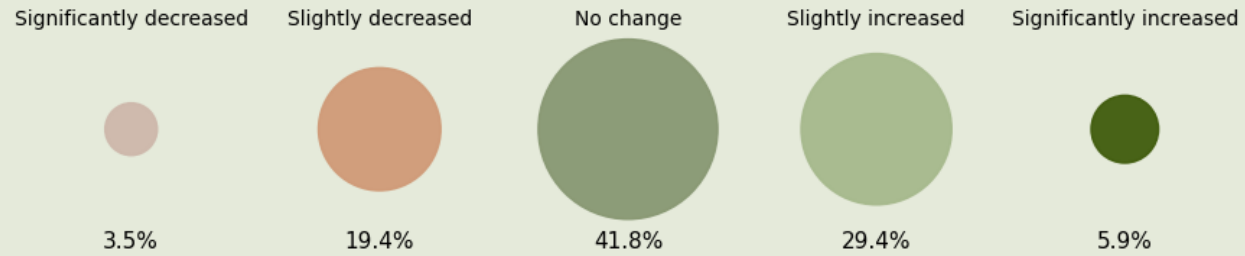
So there's no SEO apocalypse...yet. Not to mention the interplay of classic SEO methodologies with performance in AI search. Even the classic metrics from search – traffic, clicks, impressions – appear stable (at least in our data set).



Do people trust these metrics?

Trust is holding up, even rising for many: When asked whether AI Overviews and tools like ChatGPT changed their trust in traditional SEO metrics, the majority said no change; 35.3% reported increased trust while 22.9% reported decreased trust.

How Trust in Traditional SEO Metrics Has Changed with the Rise in AI Search



Though these metrics are trusted, they're reactive. They tell you how your organic growth strategy performed after the fact. How much control do teams feel over what drives those results?

How Being in Control of Strategy Leads to Higher Satisfaction

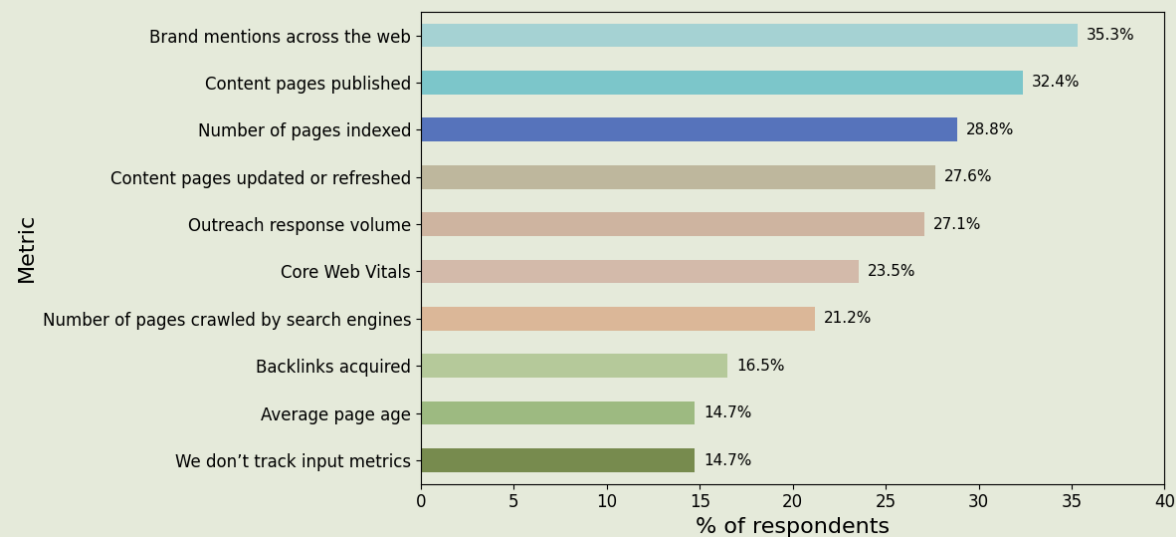
Output metrics describe what happened, while input metrics measure what you did to make it happen. These are levers teams can actually pull – publishing cadence, technical audits, outreach activity, and so on.

Only 14.7% of respondents don't track input metrics, indicating that most agree these are essential signals of future growth.

The most common input metrics tracked across groups:

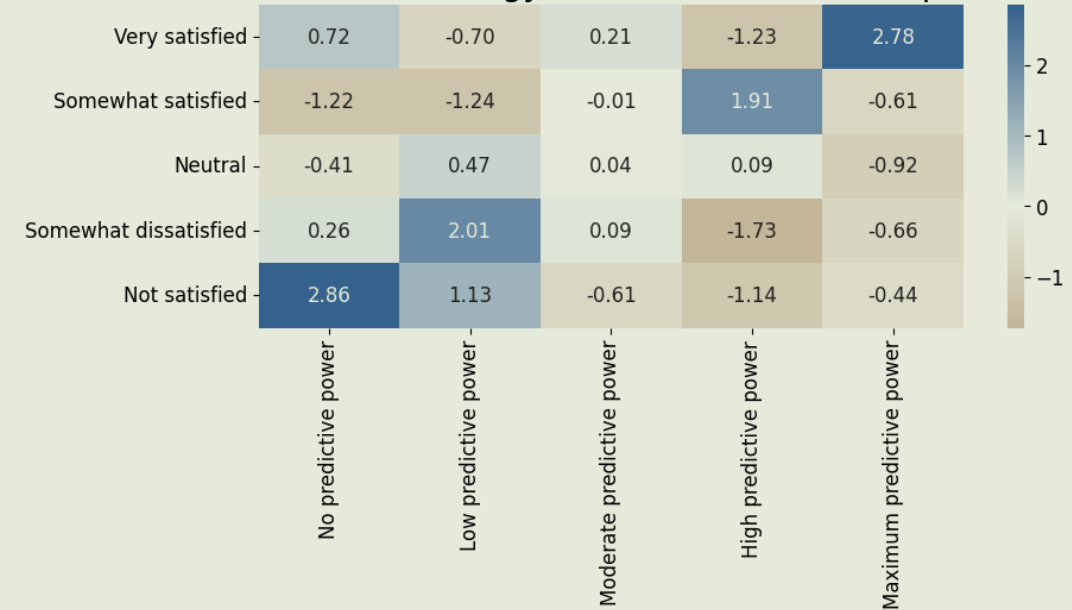
- 35.3% track brand mentions across the web
- 32.4% count their content pages published
- 28.8% look at the number of pages indexed
- 27.6% track how often they update or refresh content pages
- 27.1% measure outreach response volume
- 23.5% track Core Web Vitals
- 21.2% track the number of pages crawled by search engines
- 16.5% track backlinks acquired
- 14.7% track average page age
- 14.7% don't track input metrics

The Input Metrics Marketers Monitor to Predict Organic Growth Success



The story is not just in how common it is to track input metrics, but how teams that believe input metrics are predictive of outcomes report the highest satisfaction with their organic growth strategy.

Satisfaction with Strategy vs Predictiveness of Input Metrics



When teams believe inputs (e.g., brand mentions, pages published, pages indexed) predict revenue, satisfaction rises.

This heatmap shows where satisfaction and predictiveness answers line up more (blue) or less (brown) often than we'd expect by chance. Darker colors mean stronger relationships between the two questions.

However, the relationship is not necessarily one-way. It's equally plausible that teams already feeling less enthusiastic about their SEO programs engage with them less often, which in turn lowers their reported satisfaction. Our survey cannot distinguish which factor drives the other, only that the two consistently move together.

It also fits a broader pattern we see beyond marketing: people who feel satisfied with their SEO program – much like those happy with their wealth or health – often believe their effort and inputs (content and links, hard work, consistent fitness routines) play a key role in achieving those outcomes.

In other words, satisfaction and belief in inputs reinforce each other, creating a feedback loop of confidence and action. But input metrics are only part of the story. Another leap in satisfaction happens as teams move beyond measurement toward mastery, building maturity in AI attribution and increasing GEO focus in their organic growth strategy.



The Maturity Curve: From Measurement to Mastery

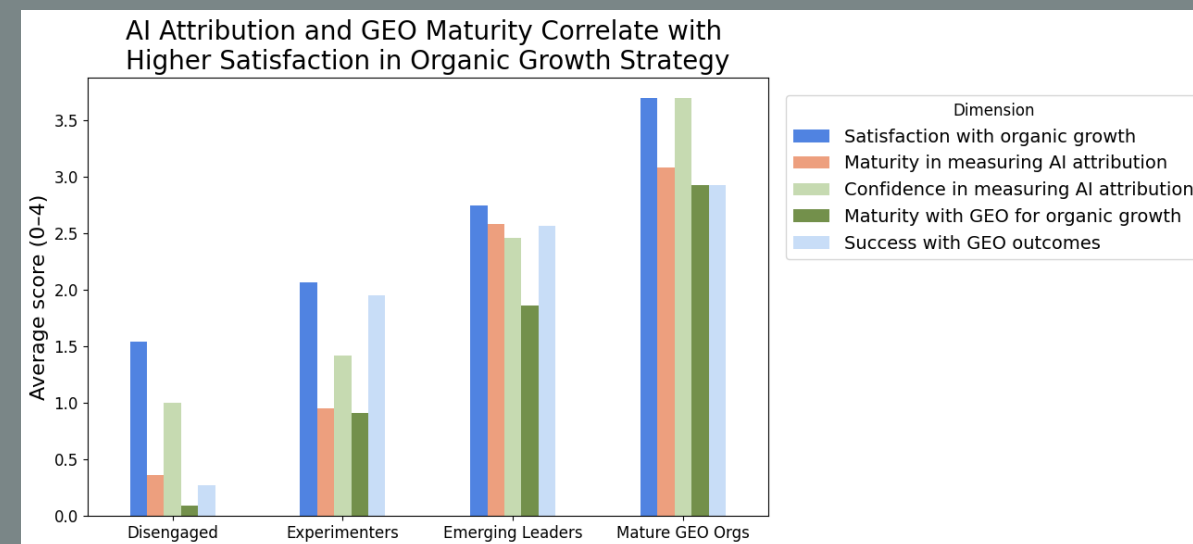
Our data shows a clear pattern: as maturity in AI attribution and GEO increases, so does satisfaction with organic growth.

Those who move forward with strong analytical foundations and investment into new methods tend to be more satisfied.

To understand this impact, we measured teams across five dimensions:

- Satisfaction with organic growth (0 = not satisfied, 4 = very satisfied) The outcome measure — how happy teams are with their current organic strategy.
- Maturity in measuring AI attribution (0 = not measuring, 4 = predictive forecasting) Captures how advanced their tools are for tracking AI-driven organic growth.
- Confidence in AI attribution accuracy (0 = not confident, 4 = very confident) Reflects how confident teams are in their current AI-measurement setup's accuracy.
- Maturity with GEO in strategy (0 = no GEO focus, 4 = GEO is a core focus) Indicates how central GEO is in their organic growth approach.
- Success with GEO outcomes (0 = not successful, 4 = very successful) Whether they feel GEO efforts are actually delivering results.

As teams move from Disengaged to Mature GEO Orgs, their average scores rise across all five dimensions. Investment in AI attribution maturity and GEO outcomes directly correlate with higher satisfaction.



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This framework revealed four distinct clusters:

The Four Readiness Clusters

Experimenters

Neutral satisfaction, Slightly effective GEO focus

- Low site traffic coming from LLMs or are not tracking it
- Strength: Willingness to try new channels gives them early data on what resonates.
- Weakness: They are flying blind, unable to prove ROI to leadership.

Next move: Automate the wins. Layer a CRM-driven revenue dashboard on top of experiments so early successes can be defended and scaled.

Disengaged

Dissatisfied, not measuring AI attribution or GEO

- This group does not formally report SEO value to stakeholders, track input metrics, or measure performance from AI-powered sources. GEO spending or 2026 budgeting is non-existent.
- Threat: Organic growth is a compounding channel; ignoring it today means an ever-widening competitive gap tomorrow.
- Next move: Start small; require self-reported attribution on every lead and set a quarterly KPI review. Even a basic measurement loop breaks the cycle of inaction.

Mature GEO Orgs

Very satisfied, Heavy GEO focus and very confident in AI attribution

Next move: Continue to refine attribution models (e.g., multi-touch plus self-reported) and share learnings externally to cement thought-leadership status.

Emerging Leaders

Somewhat satisfied, Strong AI attribution, Moderate GEO focus and success

- Opportunity: This is the "tipping-point" group. A modest bump in GEO investment or KPI cadence could move them into the top tier.
- Next move: Increase cadence of framework reviews (weekly or bi-weekly) and align goals.



What This Means for the Future

This reflects team members' views over the past year, offering a snapshot of where they are today. Building stronger measurement maturity remains critical for long-term success, helping organizations turn today's satisfaction and confidence into repeatable, data-backed growth.

Importantly, these patterns do not correlate with headcount or revenue – even small teams can achieve maturity if they prioritize systems, confidence, and measurement. The takeaway: satisfaction grows when marketers stop guessing, connect inputs to outcomes, and layer GEO confidently onto SEO foundations.

Challenges with Organic Growth

Maturity doesn't shield marketers from the realities of the market. Even the most advanced teams face headwinds that test their systems and confidence. To understand what could slow or derail organic growth in the years ahead, we asked respondents about the biggest challenges they face today.

The challenges with organic growth performance point to more external forces:

- Strong competition – 36.5%
- Budget constraints – 31.2%
- Frequent search-algorithm changes – 20.0%
- Declining click-through rates – 18.8%
- Limited content production capacity – 18.2%

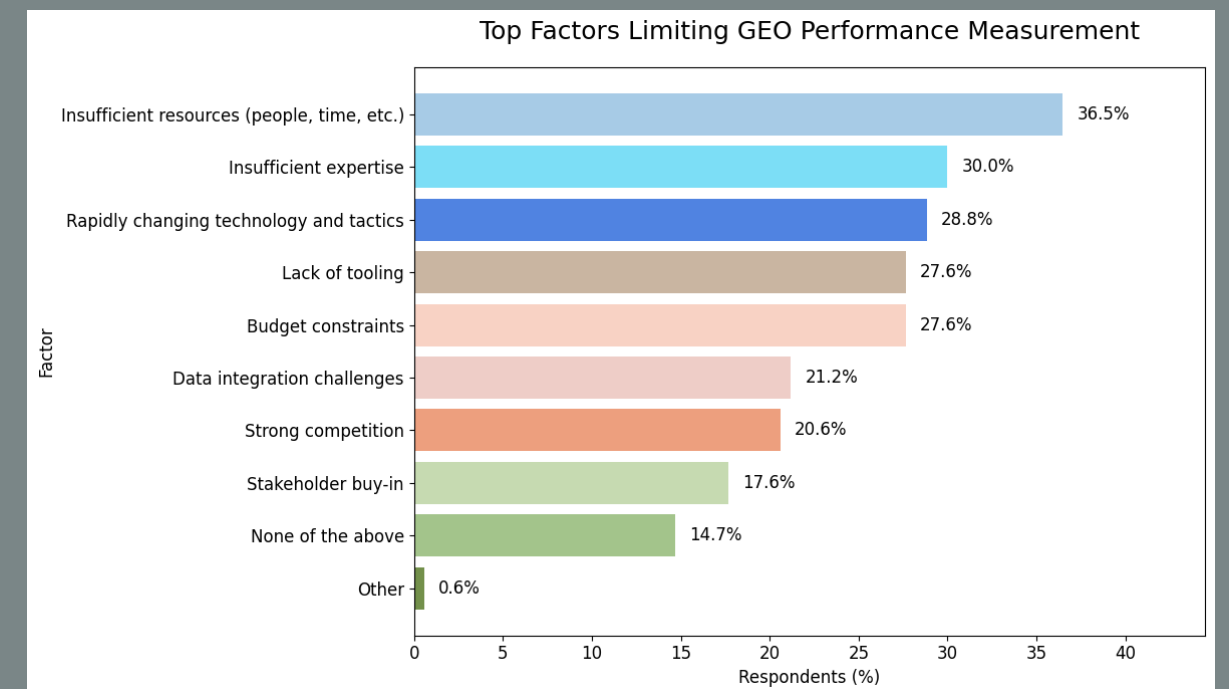
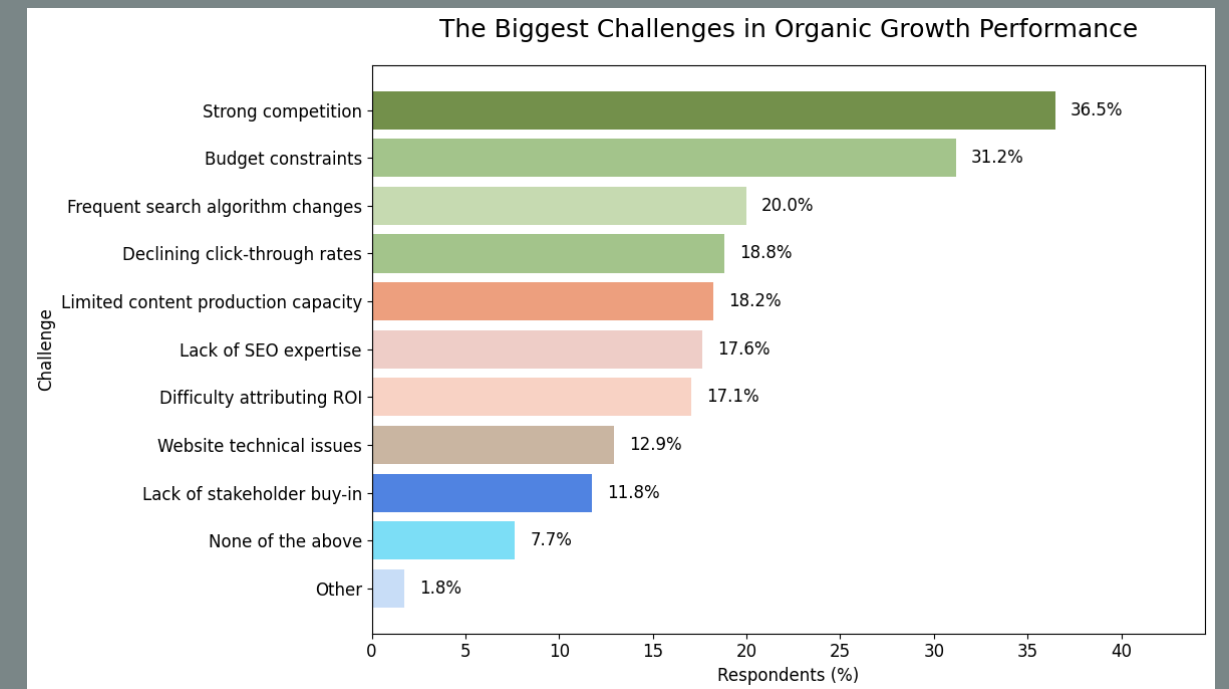
When the discussion shifts to challenges measuring GEO results, the focus turns inward:

- Insufficient resources – 36.5%
- Insufficient expertise – 30.0%
- Rapidly changing technology and tactics – 28.8%
- Budget constraints – 27.6%
- Lack of tooling to measure and attribute outcomes – 27.6%

These challenges create a self-reinforcing cycle:

- Without strong measurement, leaders can't see which growth tactics succeed, making it harder to secure investment.
- Without investment, the resource and skill gaps persist, leaving teams even more exposed to external market pressures.

Organizations that invest in people, tools, and data capabilities gain the power to respond quickly to competition, and to prove the ROI of every move they make.



Conclusion

Organic growth has always been shaped by change, and the AI Era is no exception. The data shows that marketers are largely adapting existing practices rather than abandoning them entirely. Traditional SEO metrics remain largely stable among our respondents, with most teams continuing to trust their accuracy and relevance.

The largest gaps appear not in intent but in measurement. Marketers say they value business-level outcomes such as revenue, pipeline, and conversions, yet their executive reporting often indexes on visibility metrics like traffic and keyword rankings. Only 31.8% tie organic growth to pipeline or revenue in stakeholder reporting.

AI visibility presents another gap. Fewer than one in three marketers report AI visibility to stakeholders, and fewer than one in five use AI-specific visibility tools. While teams recognize the importance of understanding the full buyer journey, many lack the systems or integrations to measure it effectively.

Satisfaction correlates most strongly with measurable control. Teams that track predictive input metrics, invest in AI attribution maturity, and maintain focus on GEO report higher satisfaction with their organic growth performance. These findings suggest that confidence and clarity grow where measurement systems evolve alongside strategy.

Bonus: Measurement Blueprint

No matter where you find yourself on the organic growth maturity curve, it doesn't hurt to audit your status and improve your measurement protocol.

We've identified the highest performing respondents, as well as triangulated this with our strategy team and their experience leading high growth B2B clients, to come up with a measurement blueprint you can follow to bring you into the new frontier when it comes to measuring your organic growth efforts.



1) The Value-Over-Vanity Scorecard

Index first and foremost on meaningful business outcomes. Orient your strategy, roadmaps, and measurement systems around moving the needle that matters, and then structure leading indicators and input metrics that correlate or predict these macro KPIs.

Establish a North Star Metric (NSM): Popular in growth marketing circles, the North Star Metrics is a representation of hard-to-fake value for growth, product, or marketing teams. Unlike something like traffic, which can be made up of unqualified visitors, a North Star Metric is indisputable in terms of its value to the business. For B2B brands, this is typically something like qualified leads or pipeline, attributable revenue, or website conversions and conversion rates.

Measure Program Outputs: In addition to performance metrics like pipeline contribution and revenue, organic programs contribute to brand awareness and can lower blended CAC. Thus, you can calculate your share of voice, share of search, brand visibility in AI, effect on sales velocity, cost per lead / cost per opportunity, and win rate. This helps establish and communicate value beyond proximate and direct impacts.

Define and track directional inputs and leading indicators: Traffic in isolation may be game-able, but if it is within the guardrail of a performance KPI like qualified pipeline, it can be a useful leading indicator. Similarly, keyword rankings if grouped by strategic importance and relevance can tell a directional story. Program inputs are also valuable in tying together actions and outcomes: pages published / updated, referring domains by quality, brand mentions and citation saturation in AI search, LLM visibility, and topical authority and coverage may be useful as decision making tools for your team. No matter what metrics and dimensions you are tracking, seek to report meaningful business outcomes at the executive level, if possible tying efforts and interventions to impact on core KPIs.

2) Establish an AI Measurement Model

No, measuring performance in AI engines is not perfect and will likely continue to prevent opacity and challenges to marketers.

Yes, we still need to move forward and establish directional trends and analytics to fuel better decisions and performance.

We offer the following model that is simple, useful, and can be customized based on your industry, go-to-market and business model, and technology stack:

Visibility: Track brand visibility against core prompts and in relation to competitors. Use a platform like Peec, Profound, Search Party, Goodie, or the many others on the market. Use voice of customer data and category entry points to establish which prompts to track. Isolate experiments and measure visibility deltas over time to establish rough causality with your interventions. Run reports on AI Overviews and how they impact your current SEO performance and footprint.

Engagement: Set up referral traffic reports filtering for AI engines like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini to establish traffic patterns and analyze user engagement and website behavior like conversions, pages per session, and which pages are showing up in AI engines.

Conversion: If possible, introduce self-reported attribution into your lead forms, or at the very least, set up listeners using Gong, Chorus, or AI notetakers for references to AI referrals on sales calls. Map self-reported referrals and direct referrals to pipeline and attribution by integrating CRM and marketing automation platforms with your web analytics and web forms. Complete the picture by connecting prompt level visibility to actual qualified leads and revenue to establish incremental revenue measurements.

Things are complicated right now, and they're almost certain to change as AI engines evolve, build features, and users adopt them over time. Customer journeys themselves are likely reshuffling, representing a need to reconsider which attribution models best represent this journey, which is often opaque or hidden in AI engines, dark social, peer networks, and direct traffic.

3) Establish Rituals and Cadences Around Organic Measurement

While you don't want to over-rotate on daily data irregularities, it helps to regularly revisit your measurement models and whether or not they are precise, set up correctly, and enabling your team to make better decisions as to how to invest in organic growth.

This cadence will vary based on your company size, culture, and industry, but we like a fractal model where you report high level patterns frequently, dive into cohorts, segments, and drilldowns regularly, and make decisions on KPIs, attribution models, and budget reallocation sparingly. Something like this:

Weekly: Create self-serve BI dashboard using Looker Studio or a similar product that allows executives and team members to review core KPIs like conversion from organic sources, traffic patterns, pipeline impact, and share of voice in AI. We like to send a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly email (depending on the company) sharing highlights from these KPIs and any meaningful movements.

Monthly: Drilldown into user segments, different platforms (ChatGPT vs Gemini, for instance), content groupings and cohorts, and mine insights that could fuel strategic or tactical shifts. Structure and prioritize insights into actions and hypotheses for experiments.

Quarterly: KPI re-prioritization; GEO tactic evaluation vs. pipeline impact; budget reallocation.

Methodology

We surveyed 170 marketers in the U.S. on September 13, 2025, asking 45 questions about SEO metrics, attribution, tools, challenges, and where they plan to invest next. Respondents came from a mix of specialties, company sizes, and industries.





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Cate Dombrowski is a Content Data Analyst at Omniscient Digital, where she blends storytelling with statistics. With a background in marketing and data analytics, she's driven by a curiosity to uncover hidden insights or validate ideas with data. Outside of work, she enjoys cycling, trying new restaurants, and reading in Central Park.





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