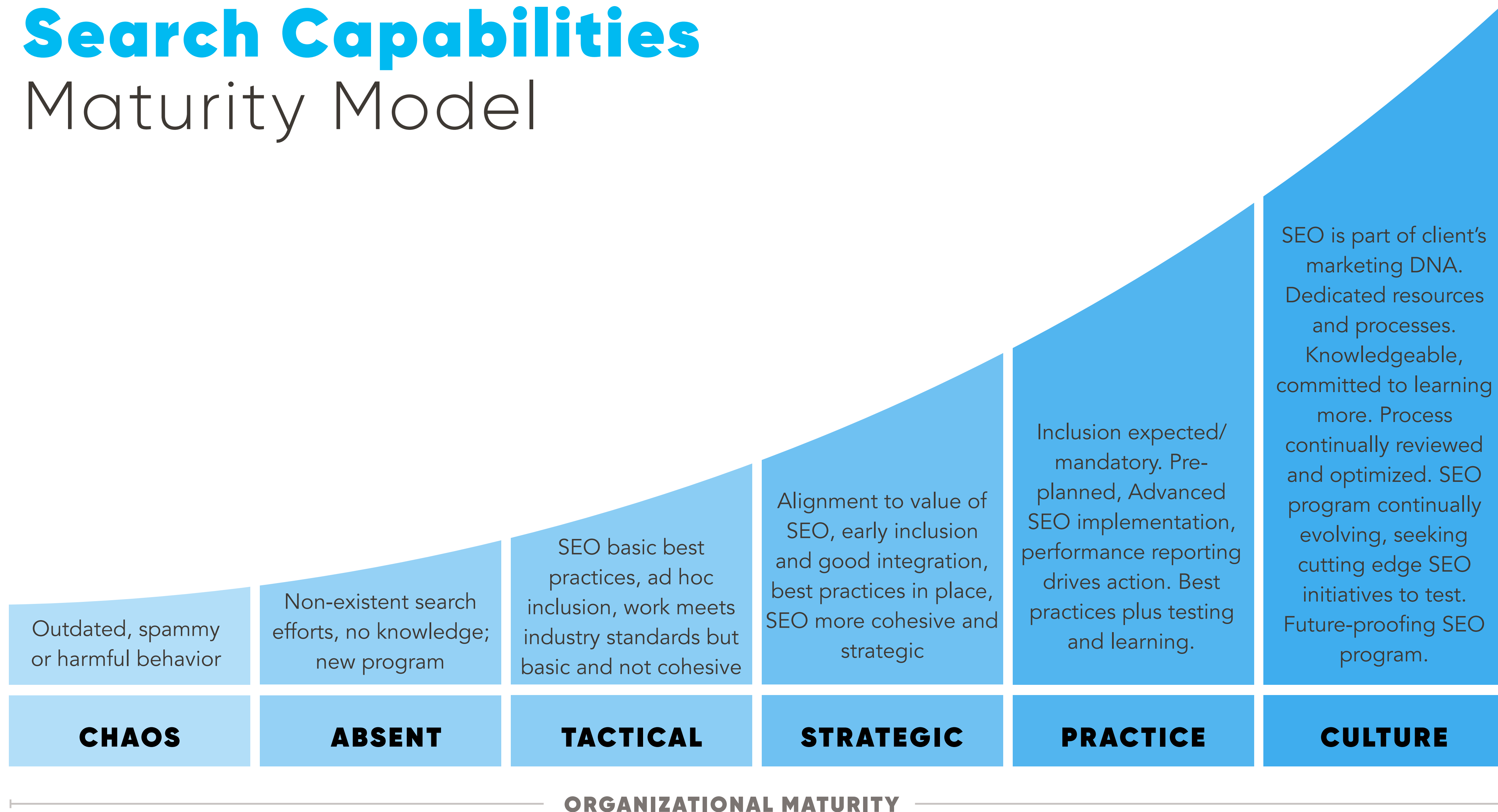


# Search Capabilities Maturity Model

CAPABILITIES MATURITY



# Search Capabilities Scorecard

STAGE	0 (CHAOS)	1 (NON-EXISTENT)	2 (TACTICAL)	3 (STRATEGIC)	4 (PRACTICE)	5 (CULTURE)
<b>COLLABORATION</b>	No collaboration, even avoids sharing information	No collaboration	After-the-fact requests, or client had to request something they know about SEO.	Early internal inclusion for consultation, before the work is completed, to be included in research and planning phase of process.	Early internal inclusion for consultation, before the work is completed, to be included in research and planning phase of process. Organic search data consistently helps drive digital/channel strategy choices.	Early internal inclusion for consultation, before the work is completed, to be included in research and planning phase of process. Organic search data consistently helps drive digital/channel strategy choices. Cross-channel collaboration and decision-making exists at all stages of process.
<b>MOBILITY</b>	No mobile experience	No mobile experience	A few key pages are mobile or even a separate M-dot mobile site, but not site-wide mobile-friendliness and no distinct mobile optimization	Fully responsive and technically mobile-friendly site, no distinct mobile optimization.	Fully responsive and mobile-friendly site, focused mobile content and speed optimization. App store assets optimized, if applicable.	Mobile-first mindset for usability, speed and content. Fully responsive and mobile-friendly site, optimization, testing. Active ASO program for app store assets, deep linking, and in-app indexing.
<b>TECHNICAL</b>	Black hat tactics	Messy code, broken technology, outdated practices. Sitemaps or robots.txt file outdated.	Minimum technical optimization, such as fixing 404 errors. HTTPS secured.	HTTPS secured. No broken pages. Canonicalized. Continual page speed improvements. Some Schema markup in use. Duplicate content management. Monitoring for SEO errors. SEO consulted for some technical projects.	Advanced technical optimization. HTTPS secured. No broken pages. Canonicalized. Continual page speed improvements. Some Schema markup in use. Duplicate content management. Monitoring for SEO errors. SEO consulted for some technical projects. SEO requirements baked into most new technical and UX projects.	Minimum technical optimization, HTTPS secured (no broken pages). Basic technical optimization (page speed, canonicalization, Schema markup). Proactive monitoring, maintenance and technical optimization efforts. Adopting new search technology (AMP, OpenGraph, In-App Indexing). Integration/partnership with developers. SEO active partners in technical projects.
<b>CONTENT</b>	Thin, weak, duplicative, spun, or over-optimized content	Content limited, random, unoptimized	SEO implemented during or after publication, not pre-planned	Keyword research performed for pre-determined topics prior to creating content	Organic search data informs content strategy and UX.	Organic search data drives digital content strategy alongside analytics, social and other channel inputs
<b>ON-PAGE</b>	Over-optimization, keyword stuffing	No content optimization, thin/weak/duplicate content	Minimum on-page optimization - titles tags, meta descriptions and H1 tags. Successfully avoiding duplicate content.	Top-to-bottom on-page and content optimization for known SEO signals. Beginning to add rich, optimized content pages based on search demand.	Advanced top-to-bottom on-page and content optimization for known SEO signals. Beginning to add rich, optimized content pages based on search demand. Advanced optimization with content optimization workflow and distribution flywheel. Testing, monitoring and iterating on-page optimization tactics.	Advanced top-to-bottom on-page and content optimization for known SEO signals. Beginning to add rich, optimized content pages based on search demand. Advanced optimization with content optimization workflow and distribution flywheel. Testing, monitoring and iterating on-page optimization tactics. Organic search informs content ideation. Advanced optimization with content optimization workflow and distribution flywheel. Testing, monitoring and iterating on-page optimization tactics.
<b>OFF-PAGE</b>	Link penalties, spammy link directories or exchanges, low-quality guest-blogging	No link-building, no off-site optimization	No active link-building, some passive link reception. Claim major social media profiles and local listings.	Early link-building efforts. Proactive low-hanging fruit link requests from partners or membership organizations, awards, press releases, social profile optimization.	Active link-building efforts and creating link-earning content. Proactive low-hanging fruit link requests from partners or membership organizations, awards, press releases. Active monitoring web for unlinked mentions. Active link profile monitoring. Periodic opportunistic link outreach. Local listing ownership and optimization.	Proactive low-hanging fruit link requests from partners or membership organizations, awards, press releases, active monitoring web for unlinked mentions. Local listing ownership and optimization. Persistent ongoing link-building campaigns, partnership outreach. Coordination with content strategy leads to increased volume of earned links. Nurturing other third party sites: reviews, forums, communities, etc.
<b>NEW TECHNOLOGY</b>	No new technology understanding or focus	No new technology understanding or focus. No risk tolerance	Chasing the shiny new technology with little focus on end goals.	Sees clear opportunity for new search technology to achieve business goals, researching and planning to implement.	Understanding of implications of new technology and implementing new technologies to perform in search and other channels. Actively implementing and testing new technology.	Actively implementing and testing new technology. Aggressively pursuing visibility and engagement in new technology for search, measuring efficacy, and continuing to optimize. High risk tolerance.
<b>ANALYTICS</b>	None	Present, with no organic search reporting	Occasionally project-specific follow-up after SEO initiatives published, inconsistently executed, no regular reporting	Regular reporting, rankings, traffic, engagement. Rearview mirror performance reporting with some action items derived from insights.	Regular reporting, rankings, traffic, engagement, content consumption, conversions. Relying on performance reporting to drive SEO strategy and next iterations from insights.	Regular reporting, rankings, traffic, engagement, content consumption, conversions. Multi-channel funnels, testing, conversion rate optimization. Data-driven organization that leans into day-to-day data management, performance reporting, and decision-making.