

MeasureFest

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Search Theory

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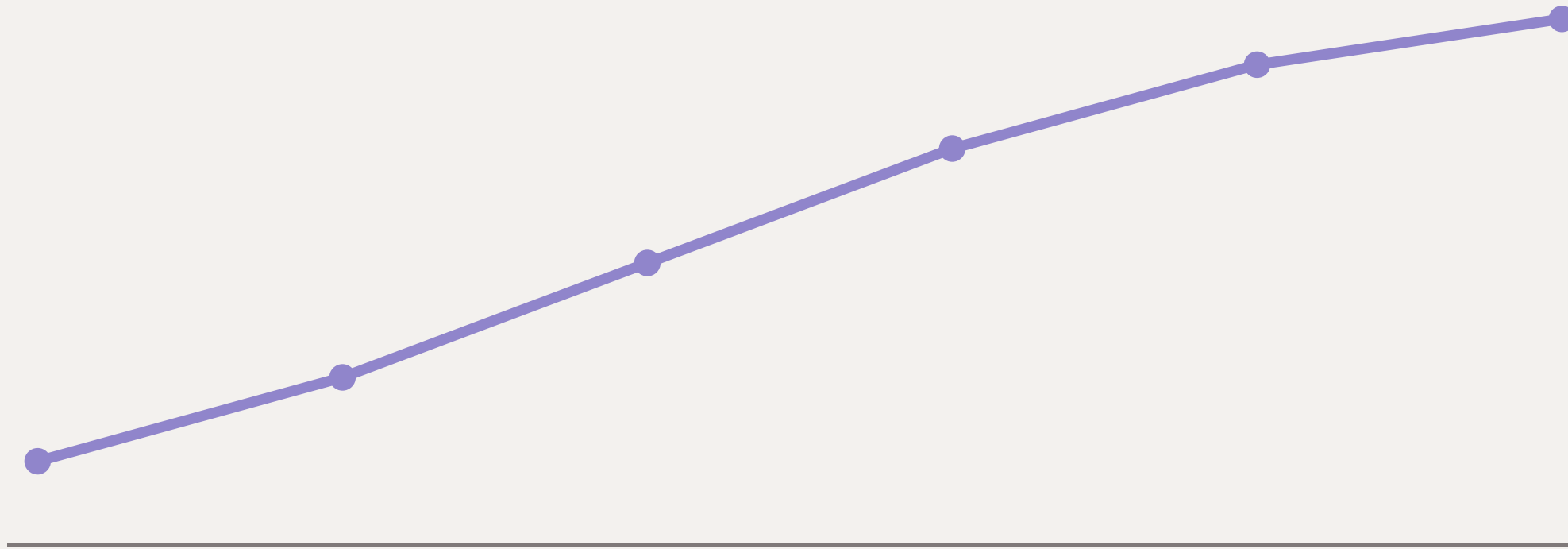
How to Get SEO Budget Signed Off

A simple mathematical model for ROI

"We can approve another £50k of ad spend."

"£50k for SEO? What exactly do we get back?"

The ad team has a response curve.



SPEND → RESPONSE → RETURN

30 articles.
10 links.
1 technical
audit.

That is a
to-do list.
Not an
investment
case.

**THE FIX:
MAKE SEO
INVESTABLE.**

Five inputs. One investment case.

DEMAND

100k

CAPTURE

+5pp

CVR

3%

VALUE

£250

RAMP

10→100%

Start with the demand that already exists. Estimate how much more of it SEO can realistically capture, apply your conversion rate and customer value, then phase that return over time. That turns an SEO plan into a revenue forecast you can compare directly against the cost of investment.

Search demand
incremental click share
conversion rate
value
ramp

= FORECAST

Start with demand you can defend.

100,000

qualified searches / month

**GSC + Keyword Planner +
paid search terms**

**De-duplicate. Remove
irrelevant demand.**

Do not forecast “position #1”.

+5pp
incremental organic
click share

Model the extra share of
demand you think SEO
can realistically capture.

Use your conversion rate.

3%

organic conversion
rate

**Your GA4 / CRM data
beats an industry
benchmark.**

Revenue is not the finish line.

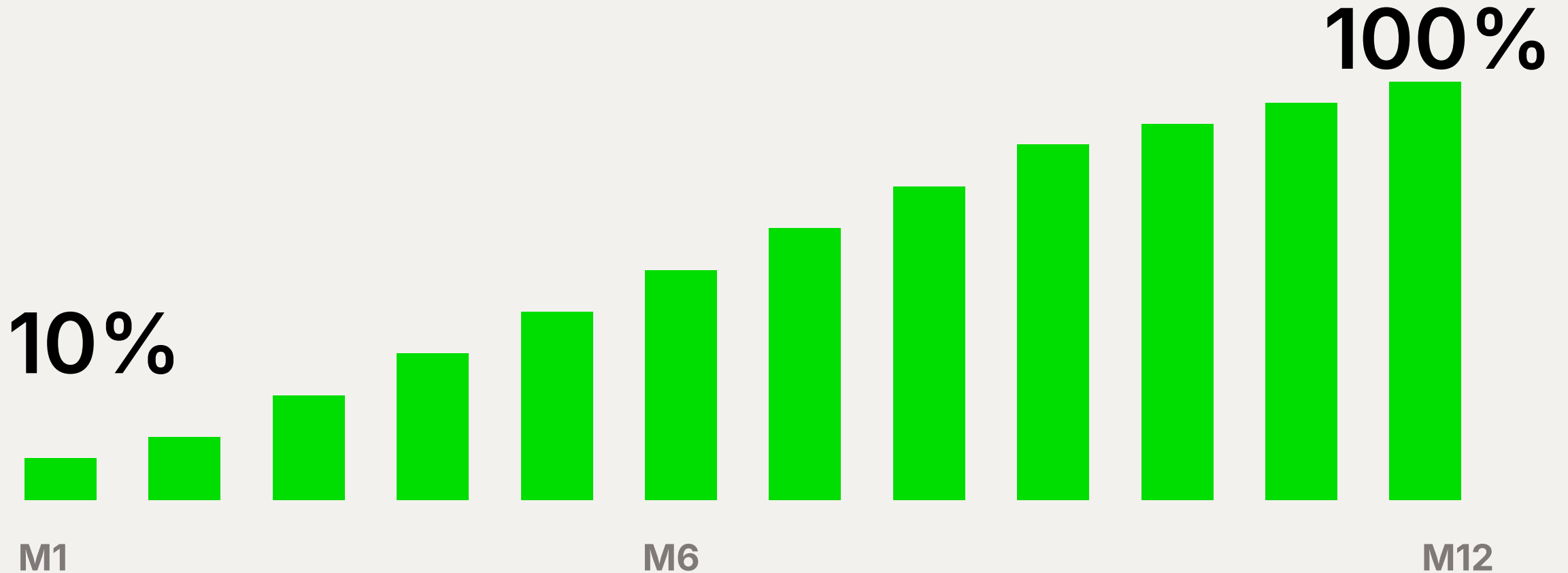
£250

average order value

× 45% contribution margin

Finance funds profit, cash
and payback - not traffic.

SEO has a ramp. Put it in the model.



$$100k \times 5\% \times 3\% \times £250 \times \text{ramp}$$

£261k

forecast year-one revenue

Illustrative example - replace with your data.

£261k revenue is not £261k of value.

45%

contribution margin

£117k

year-one contribution

If this company operates at a 45% contribution margin, only 45p of every £1 of additional revenue is actually contributing towards overhead and profit after the direct cost of making that sale.

So £261,000 of extra revenue becomes roughly £117,000 of contribution.

£75k

total SEO investment



+56%

net ROI on contribution

Payback: month 10

Never present one number.

DOWNSIDE

-22%

£130k revenue

BASE

+56%

£261k revenue

UPSIDE

+150%

£417k revenue

This is not a promise.

It is an underwriting model.

**Every assumption can be challenged, changed
and reviewed.**

Give them four numbers.

ASK

£75k

RETURN

£117k

PAYBACK

M10

REVIEW

M6

Everything else belongs underneath the model.

“WE ARE ASKING FOR £75K.

**OUR BASE CASE RETURNS £117K OF
CONTRIBUTION IN YEAR ONE.**

PAYBACK IS MONTH 10.

WE REVIEW THE MODEL AT MONTH 6.”

Do not try to make SEO certain.

Make the uncertainty
investable.

Demand × capture × conversion × value × ramp.

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off on your SEO
budget.**



**STEAL THE MODEL.
CHALLENGE THE
ASSUMPTIONS.
GET THE BUDGET.**



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