
RECRUITMENT SEO PLAYBOOK / 2026

The 120-Minute Weekly SEO Workflow

For Recruitment Agencies

A weekly operating system for in-house marketing leads, agency directors, and founders who don't have time to 'do SEO' but need Search and AI Visibility producing client meetings, candidate registrations, and retained search wins.

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Why most agencies stop doing SEO

You already know SEO works. That isn't the problem.

The problem is what happens in a typical recruitment marketing week. Your marketing lead owns the website, the job-feed sync, paid LinkedIn, the newsletter, sector reports, careers updates for every new BD win, social posts from consultants who never sent the brief, and whatever the MD asked for in standup. SEO sits in the same tab as 'fix the contact form' and 'update the consultant headshots'.

It rarely feels urgent. Until a sector hub drops out of the top three for a flagship phrase and a six-figure retained search lead lands with a competitor you've never heard of.

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

A 120-minute weekly system that protects the Google rankings and AI citations already producing client meetings and candidate registrations, finds the next ranking you can shift from page two to page one, defends your share of voice in ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews, and feeds search data straight into BD, content, and consultant outreach. Built for recruitment, by an SEO who used to work the desk.

Why generalist SEO advice doesn't fit

Recruitment websites are structurally different. You're publishing transient job pages that decay within weeks. Your most valuable assets (sector hubs, salary guides, consultant author pages) are evergreen and should never decay. Your traffic splits two ways every minute of every day: candidates looking for roles and salary data, clients looking for specialist agencies in their sector. And in 2026, the hiring manager who would have Googled 'best finance recruiters Manchester' last year is now asking ChatGPT or Perplexity the same question, and shortlisting the three agencies it names. Generic SEO checklists treat all of that as one problem. It isn't.

This workflow respects the split. Every 120-minute block protects the evergreen assets, manages the transient ones, defends your share of voice in AI answers, and ends with a decision the BD team can act on.

Four outcomes, every session

Every 120 minutes has to close with progress against four outcomes. If a task doesn't move one of them, it doesn't get the time.

#	Outcome	What it means for recruitment
1	Protect	Defend the Google rankings and AI citations already producing qualified traffic: sector hubs, salary guides, consultant author pages, key location pages.
2	Fix	Remove what's blocking visibility: job-page decay, JS-rendered listings Google and AI crawlers can't read, canonicals firing the wrong way on /jobs/, orphaned sector pages.
3	Improve	Move one money page one meaningful step forward: a sector hub, a salary guide, or a service page (executive search, contract, interim).
4	Feed	Convert one piece of search data into a decision: a BD angle, a candidate attraction headline, an FAQ block, a brief for a consultant LinkedIn post.

THE FILTER

If a task can't be tied to ranking protection, candidate registration, client meetings booked, BD-aligned visibility, or consultant brand-building, it doesn't belong in the 120 minutes. Move it to a backlog, or kill it.

The 120-minute workflow

Seven blocks. Each one ends with a written output. No block runs over.

0–15 min

Pulse check on organic data

Open Google Search Console and GA4. You're not writing a report. You're answering one question: is organic visibility moving in a direction that needs action this week?

Check, in this order:

- GSC clicks, impressions, CTR, average position, last 28 days versus the previous 28.
- Sector hub pages: any movement on the top five commercial phrases per hub.

- Candidate-side queries (salary, day rate, how to become): impressions and CTR shifts.
- AI visibility: run your three flagship sector phrases through ChatGPT, Perplexity, and a Google AI Overview. Are you cited? Who is?
- Indexing report: anything important dropped to 'Crawled, currently not indexed'.
- Manual actions, security issues, structured data errors on JobPosting and Person schema.

Output: a four-line note (biggest win, biggest concern, one URL to investigate, one action this week). Paste it into Slack or the team doc. Done.

15–35 min

Find the highest-leverage query

Filter GSC to queries in positions four to fifteen with real impressions. That's where the next ranking lives. For recruitment, prioritise three patterns:

- Commercial sector queries with location modifiers ('finance recruitment Manchester', 'IT contractors London').
- Candidate-attraction queries with high impressions and weak CTR ('senior data engineer salary UK').
- Service-type queries ('executive search', 'interim CFO', 'RPO providers') ranking on page two.

Resist the urge to build a list. Pick three things only: one page to improve, one query to answer better, one title or meta description to test. That's the brief for the rest of the session.

Blocks three and four

35–60 min

Improve one money page

This is the most important 25 minutes of the week. A money page in recruitment is any page close to a client meeting, a retained search instruction, or a quality candidate registration. Sector hubs sit at the top of the list. Service pages, location pages, and salary guides come next.

Ask:

- What does a hiring manager need to believe before they pick up the phone?
- Which competitor's name is the prospect comparing this page against in their head?
- What proof would reduce hesitation: placements made, retained searches completed, average time to shortlist, fill rates, candidate quality scores?
- Which query is this page almost satisfying but not fully? Add the missing answer.
- What's the one internal link a candidate or client needs to convert?

Common 25-minute wins:

- Add three FAQs sourced from real GSC queries on that page. Wire them with FAQPage schema.
- Tighten the H1 and intro so the search intent is satisfied in the first 50 words.
- Add a consultant byline, photo, and Person schema. E-E-A-T isn't optional anymore.
- Add specific proof: a named placement, a retained search outcome, or a client quote.
- Add a 'who this isn't for' line. Recruitment buyers respect specialists, not generalists.
- Improve the CTA: 'Brief us on your role' beats 'Get in touch' every time.

60–80 min

Fix one technical or indexing issue

Technical work can eat the full two hours if you let it. Frame the question this way: what could stop an important page from being discovered, understood, indexed, or trusted? That filter kills most busywork on its own.

Recruitment-specific watch list:

- Job pages indexed when they shouldn't be, or expired job pages still ranking. Apply noindex on closed roles and route 301s to the sector hub.
- JS-rendered job feeds Google can't parse. Test in URL Inspection. If the rendered HTML lacks role titles, ship server-side rendering.
- AI crawler accessibility. GPTBot, PerplexityBot, and ClaudeBot don't render JavaScript. If your sector hubs are JS-heavy, you're invisible in AI answers. Check robots.txt and the rendered HTML.
- Canonicals on /jobs/ firing back to the homepage. A common Bullhorn or JobAdder integration bug.
- Sector hub pages with thin content under 600 words, no internal links from blog posts, no schema.
- Duplicate consultant pages: one on /team/, one on /consultants/, one on /author/. Pick one canonical.
- Orphan pages on /locations/ that no internal link points to.

Output: one fix shipped, one fix assigned with an owner, or one developer brief sent. Document the affected URLs, the expected behaviour, and the test that proves it's done. That counts as progress.

Blocks five, six, seven

80–100 min

Internal linking for revenue

Internal linking is the fastest underused SEO win in recruitment. It doesn't need new content. It does need a deliberate route from informational pages to commercial ones.

The recruitment linking path that converts:

- Blog post (informational) → salary guide (consideration) → sector hub (commercial) → Contact or Brief Us (conversion).
- Salary guide → service page (executive search, contract, interim) → consultant author page → Contact.
- Candidate guide → live roles category → 'register your CV' page.

This week, ship five to ten links that:

- Push authority from high-traffic informational content to the sector hub it serves.
- Use descriptive anchors. 'Manchester finance recruitment' beats 'click here' and 'learn more'.
- Connect older articles to the newest sector commentary. Re-circulate authority.
- Route a salary guide directly into the matching service page CTA.

100–115 min

Turn one query into BD ammunition

Search data shouldn't die in an SEO silo. The best query you found in block two is a gift to BD, content, and consultant outreach. It's the exact language hiring managers or candidates used.

One query, five uses:

- A sector hub headline rewrite.
- A LinkedIn post for the consultant who owns that sector.
- A cold email opening line for the BDR or SDR.
- An FAQ on the matching service page.
- A talking point for the next sector roundtable or webinar.

Share one query insight with the wider team every week. SEO stops being a channel. It becomes market intelligence.

115–120 min

Lock next week's priority

End with one decision. Not a backlog. Not a list. One sentence:

TEMPLATE

'Next week, our highest-leverage SEO action is [X] because [Y].' Example: 'Next week, our highest-leverage SEO action is rebuilding the Finance Recruitment Manchester hub because it ranks position six on the flagship phrase, the page is 540 words, and we have two live retained instructions in that sector we can quote as proof.'

The workflow at a glance

Print this. Pin it on the wall. Run the workflow every Monday morning before email opens.

Time	Block	Goal	Output
0–15	Organic pulse check	Spot issues and movement	Four-line note
15–35	Query opportunity review	Find page-two rankings to push	Three opportunities
35–60	Improve one money page	Lift rankings and conversions	One page update
60–80	Fix one technical issue	Remove indexing or render blockers	One fix or dev brief
80–100	Internal linking for revenue	Route authority to commercial pages	5–10 links
100–115	Turn data into BD ammunition	Feed search insight into BD and content	One reusable insight
115–120	Lock next week's priority	Protect momentum	One next action

Four-week rotation

Run the same seven blocks every week, but rotate the emphasis monthly. It stops the workflow becoming repetitive and forces you to touch every part of the site over a four-week cycle.

Week	Emphasis	Typical output
1	Money page week	Sector hub or service page rebuilt, FAQs added, schema shipped, CTA improved.
2	Authority asset week	Salary guide refreshed with current ONS or sector-body data, internal links rewired.

Week	Emphasis	Typical output
3	Technical cleanup week	Crawl issues fixed, expired roles redirected, JS render audit, sitemap cleaned.
4	Search insight week	GSC data converted into BD angles, consultant LinkedIn posts, FAQ blocks, sales talking points.

What to stop doing

Most recruitment marketing teams don't have a doing problem. They have a stopping problem. Cut the following, this week.

- Stop publishing market commentary because a consultant felt like writing one. Publish because GSC told you the query has demand.
- Stop chasing every Screaming Frog warning. Prioritise issues on revenue pages first.
- Stop SEO-optimising live job pages. They decay. Optimise the sector hub instead.
- Stop building new content before fixing the pages already on page two.
- Stop reporting traffic without tying it to candidate registrations, brief-us submissions, or meetings booked.
- Stop benchmarking against generalist SEO advice. Recruitment SEO has its own physics.
- Stop letting the salary guide age. If your data is 18 months old, candidates and clients spot it.
- Stop running consultant author pages without Person schema, photo, LinkedIn link, and three named placements.

Make this work without a dedicated SEO

The workflow doesn't need an SEO department. It needs one owner, a weekly rhythm, and a bias to ship. The role split below works for most recruitment agencies between five and 80 fee-earners.

Role	What they own in the 120 minutes
Marketing lead	Protects the 120 minutes, chooses the weekly priority, owns the GSC pulse check note.
Content lead or sector consultant	Writes the page update, FAQs, and consultant byline. Sourced quotes from live placements.
Developer or web partner	Ships technical fixes. Owns JS rendering audits, schema, and the /jobs/ canonicalisation.

Role	What they own in the 120 minutes
BD director or sales lead	Confirms which queries map to live retained instructions in the pipeline. Feeds back objections.
Consultants	Contribute the candidate and client objections they hear on calls. One per week per consultant.
MD or founder	Reads the four-line weekly note. Asks one question. That's it.

AI workflows that compress the 120 minutes

AI is useful inside this workflow when it removes repetitive setup. It is not useful when it's asked to 'do SEO'. The five workflows below shave 30 to 45 minutes off the weekly session if you build them once and run them every week.

GSC opportunity scanner

Connect Search Console. Prompt the model to surface queries in positions four to fifteen, filter to commercial intent (sector + location, service type, salary), and flag page-query mismatches. Output: a three-row table with page, query, and recommended action.

Salary guide refresh assistant

Feed the existing guide, the publish date, and a prompt to identify sections where data is over 12 months old. Ask for current ONS or sector-body figures with sources. Output: a redline of what to update, with citations.

Internal linking map

Feed the sitemap and the top 20 commercial URLs. Prompt the model to suggest a routing map from informational to commercial, with anchor text variants. Output: a CSV of source URL, target URL, anchor, and rationale.

Schema stack generator

Per template (sector hub, service page, consultant page, blog), generate JSON-LD for FAQPage, Article, Person, BreadcrumbList. Reference Google Search Central docs in the prompt to keep field names current.

Weekly digest summariser

Feed the four-line pulse note, the page update shipped, the fix logged, and the query insight. Prompt for one paragraph aimed at the MD. Output: a 90-word Slack-ready summary by Friday.

ONE RULE FOR AI IN THIS WORKFLOW

Keep each assistant narrow. Don't build one generic SEO bot and expect it to handle every block. Five small, sharp workflows beat one broad one every time.

If 120 minutes a week isn't enough, that's the point.

You've just been handed the operating system we run on retainer clients. The seven blocks. The four-week rotation. The role split. The AI workflows. The stop-doing list. None of it watered down. None of it held back.

So why give it away?

Because shipping the workflow every Monday for the next 52 weeks is where most recruitment agencies fall apart. The marketing lead gets pulled into a BD launch. The consultant who promised the sector commentary misses the brief. The 120 minutes becomes 30. Sector hubs drift. Salary guides age. The competitor who treated Search and AI Visibility like the strategic channel it has now become gets cited in ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews while you don't.

THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

One sector hub slipping from position three to position seven typically costs a UK recruitment agency six figures in retained search revenue across a 12-month window. We've reverse-engineered that exact number four times this year for prospects who waited too long to start. Search and AI Visibility isn't a marketing line item. It's where your next BD pipeline already lives.

If that's where you are, here's how we work.

Three ways to work with us

Built around where you actually are: in-house team that needs a map, no team at all, or a deadline you have to hit...

SEO Growth Strategy

For agencies with rankings to defend and an in-house marketer who needs the next 12 weeks mapped.

- A documented strategy your team executes against, with prioritised actions and weekly milestones.
- Sector hub teardowns, AI citation gap analysis, internal linking architecture, schema stack.
- KPIs tied to brief-us submissions, qualified candidate registrations, and consultant inbound.
- Outcome: clarity on the next move. Faster execution at a lower fixed cost than a retainer.

£1,795 one-off

SEO & AI Visibility Retainers

For agencies that want the whole programme run. Strategy through to AI citation work, owned by us.

- Three tiers: Core £1,495/mo, Pro £2,195/mo, Elite £3,495/mo with the Vanguard Protocol for predictive AI visibility.
- Strategy, content velocity, technical, schema, off-page authority, AI search citation work, monthly direction calls.
- Direct access to Dan Jones for commercial calls. Reports tied to brief-us submissions and fees billed, not just rankings.
- Outcome: senior recruitment-SEO function plumbed straight into your BD pipeline, without the senior-SEO salary.

From £1,495/mo

90-Day SEO & AI Visibility Sprint

For agencies that need compressed impact before the next BD cycle or board meeting.

- Fixed scope, fixed outcome, shipped by us inside a quarter.
- Technical fixes, AI citation groundwork, sector hub rebuild, salary guide programme, schema stack, internal linking.
- Migration Sprint variant protects rankings when launching a new recruitment website.
- Outcome: a step change in Search and AI Visibility you can point to inside 90 days.

£9,995

Which one fits?

Most recruitment agencies fall into one of these four. If you recognise yourself in one of the first three, you already know the answer.

If your situation is...	The right move is...
You have an in-house marketer who needs senior SEO direction. You can execute, you can't map.	SEO Growth Strategy
You have no marketing resource at all, or a marketing lead drowning in BD launches and consultant requests.	SEO & AI Visibility Retainer
You need a step change in 90 days. A BD cycle, a board meeting, an investor update, a launch.	90-Day Sprint

If your situation is...	The right move is...
You're not sure which of the three fits.	Book the 15-minute triage call

Book the 15-minute triage call

No deck. No pitch. We open your Search Console and run your three flagship sector phrases through ChatGPT and Perplexity live on the call. You'll know inside 15 minutes whether Search and AI Visibility is a Growth Strategy, a Retainer, or a Sprint job. If the conversation is useful, we keep talking. If not, you keep the notes from this PDF and the call. Either way, you walk away with a clearer next move than you had when you opened it.

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The 120-minute time-boxed weekly workflow methodology was originally published by Stevy Liakopoulou at Search Engine Land (29 June 2026). All recruitment-specific application, examples, role splits, AI visibility extensions, and commercial framing in this document are original work by Kaizen SEO. © 2026 Kaizen SEO Limited. Company Number 16180662. VAT 489281735. All rights reserved.