

# SEO & AEO Case Study

AI-First Organic Strategy Delivers 234% Traffic Growth and 43 Monthly AI Search Citations for a B2B SaaS Platform

<b>Page-One Keywords</b> ↑ <b>120%</b>	<b>Monthly Organic Traffic</b> ↑ <b>234%</b>	<b>AI Citations / Month</b> <b>0 → 43</b>	<b>Trial Signups from Organic</b> ↑ <b>54%</b>
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## The Client

A mid-market B2B SaaS platform in the HR technology space, providing AI-powered recruitment automation, applicant tracking, and workforce analytics to HR teams across North America. With a product-led growth model, the company depends on organic search to drive qualified trial signups and inbound pipeline. Client identity withheld under NDA.

## The Challenge

The client faced a compounding set of organic search challenges entering 2024:

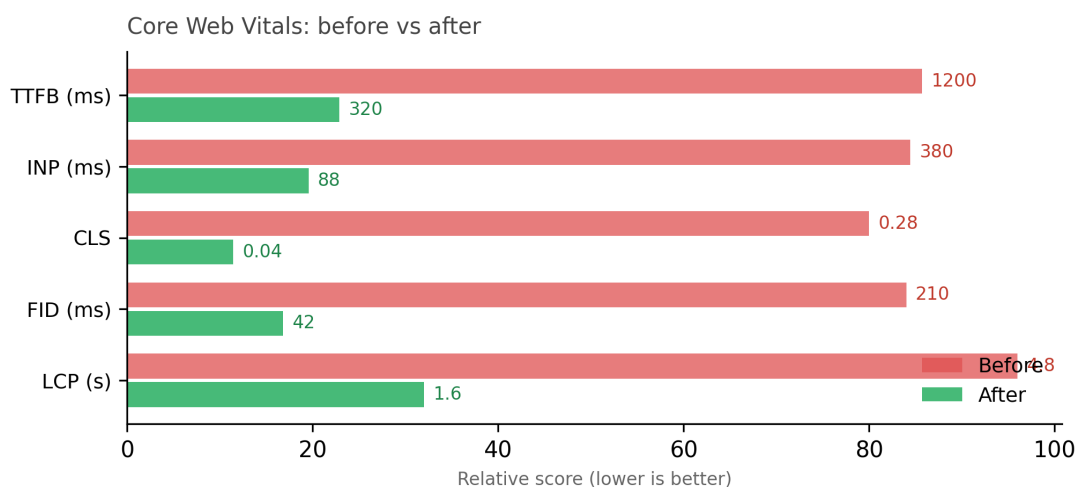
- Stagnant rankings — the majority of target keywords stuck in positions 11–30 for over 12 months
- Zero AI search visibility — brand and product pages were not surfacing in ChatGPT, Perplexity, or Google AI Overviews
- Core Web Vitals failures — LCP of 4.8s and CLS of 0.28, suppressing rankings and increasing bounce rate
- Thin content architecture — category pages under 300 words with no FAQ schema and weak E-E-A-T signals
- Unstructured internal linking — orphaned blog posts, no topical clusters, and crawl budget wasted on low-value URLs
- Competitors gaining AI citations — rival platforms appearing in AI-generated software recommendations while the client was absent

## The Solution

A phased 12-month campaign combining technical remediation, AI-first content architecture, and generative engine optimization (GEO) — designed to win both traditional SERPs and the emerging AI answer layer simultaneously.

### Phase 1 — Technical Foundation (Months 1–2)

- Full technical audit using Screaming Frog, Semrush, and Google Search Console — 214 issues identified and triaged
- Core Web Vitals overhaul: WebP conversion, lazy-loading, render-blocking resource elimination, CDN configuration
- LCP reduced from 4.8s → 1.6s; CLS from 0.28 → 0.04; INP from 380ms → 88ms — all metrics moved to green
- XML sitemap rebuild, canonical tag audit, robots.txt cleanup, and crawl budget optimization
- **llms.txt implementation:** configured /llms.txt to guide AI crawlers (GPTBot, PerplexityBot, ClaudeBot, Googlebot-Extended) toward highest-authority content

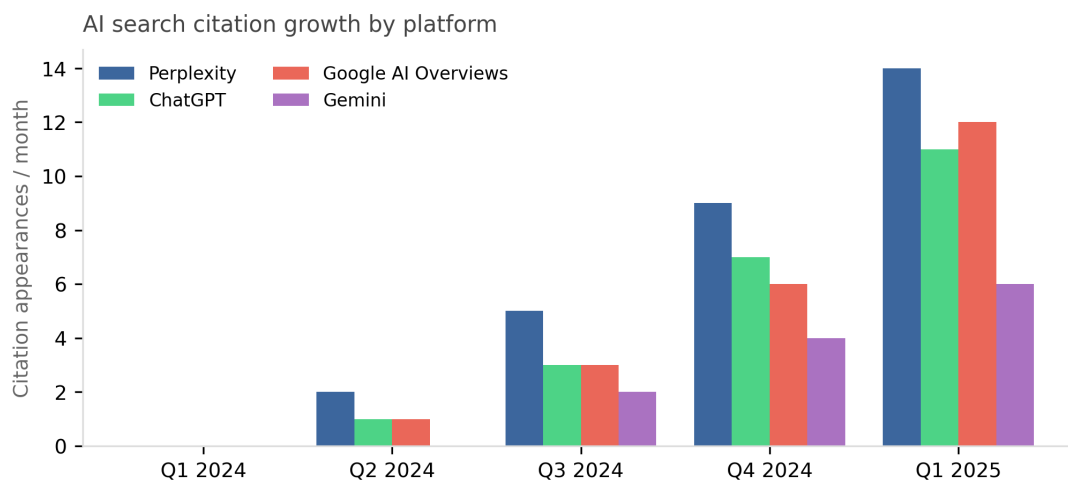


Core Web Vitals — before vs after optimization

### Phase 2 — AI Search & Entity Optimization (Months 2–5)

- Entity mapping: structured the brand as a named entity via schema.org Organization, SoftwareApplication, and Product types
- FAQ schema deployed across 38 pages; HowTo schema on 14 guides; Article schema on all blog posts
- E-E-A-T signal building: author bio pages with credentials, contributor profiles linked to LinkedIn, original research published
- Conversational query targeting: 420 long-tail questions mapped from People Also Ask, Reddit, and AI-generated discovery queries

- GEO content layer: rewrote top 20 pages to answer complete questions in the first 120 words — optimized for AI snippet extraction
- **AI share-of-voice baseline:** established tracking across ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and Google AI Overviews using weekly prompt sampling across 80 tracked queries



AI search citation growth by platform — Q1 2024 to Q1 2025

### Phase 3 — Topical Authority & Content Scale (Months 4–10)

- Topical cluster architecture: 6 pillar pages (2,500+ words each) supported by 48 cluster posts covering HR software, recruitment automation, workforce analytics, and compliance
- Programmatic SEO: 45 location-specific and role-specific landing pages generated using structured templates with unique data points
- Content refresh: 22 existing articles updated with current data, FAQ sections, internal links, and schema — averaging a 2.4x traffic lift per refreshed page
- Internal linking overhaul: 800+ internal links added via structured anchor strategy, reducing average crawl depth from 4.2 to 2.4

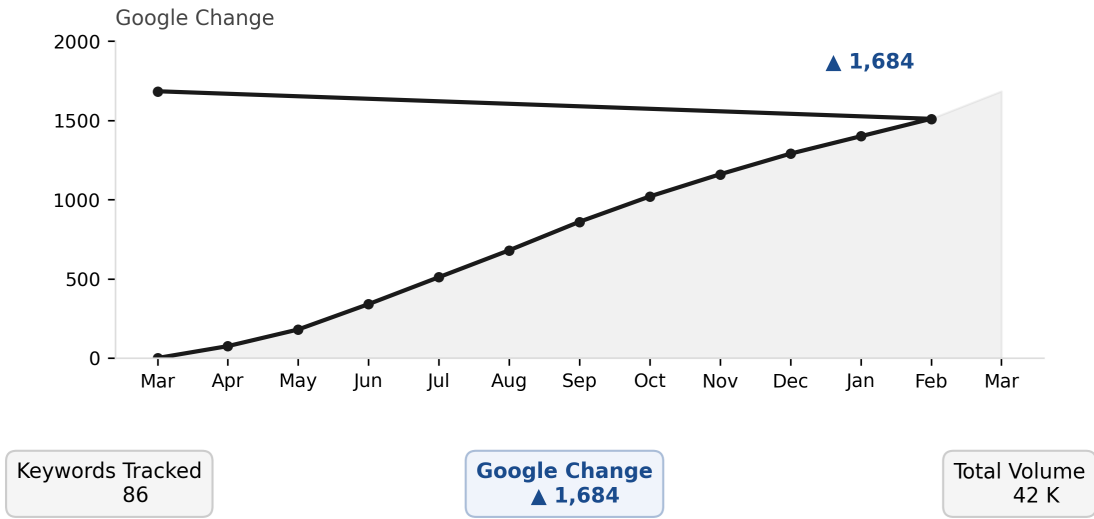
### Phase 4 — Authority & Off-Site Signals (Months 6–12)

- Digital PR: 2 original research reports published and pitched to industry media — earned placements in 4 niche publications
- 8 high-authority backlinks (DR 60+) acquired through data-led outreach and expert commentary
- Brand mention monitoring: 16 unlinked mentions converted to followed links
- Podcast and webinar appearances by the founder — transcripts structured as E-E-A-T content and published on-site

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## **The Results**

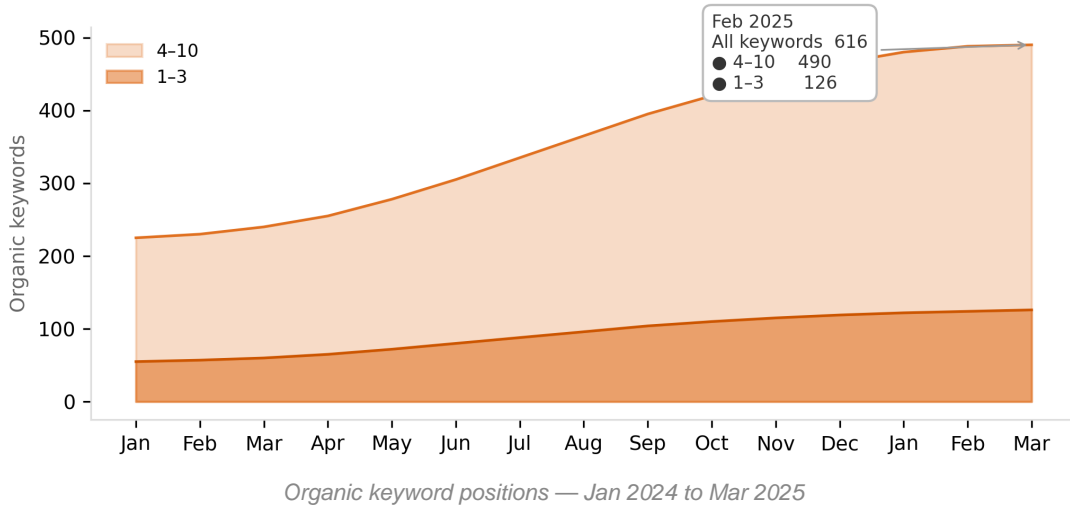
### 1,684 Positive Google Position Changes Year-Over-Year



Rank Tracker — Google position changes, Mar 2024 – Mar 2025

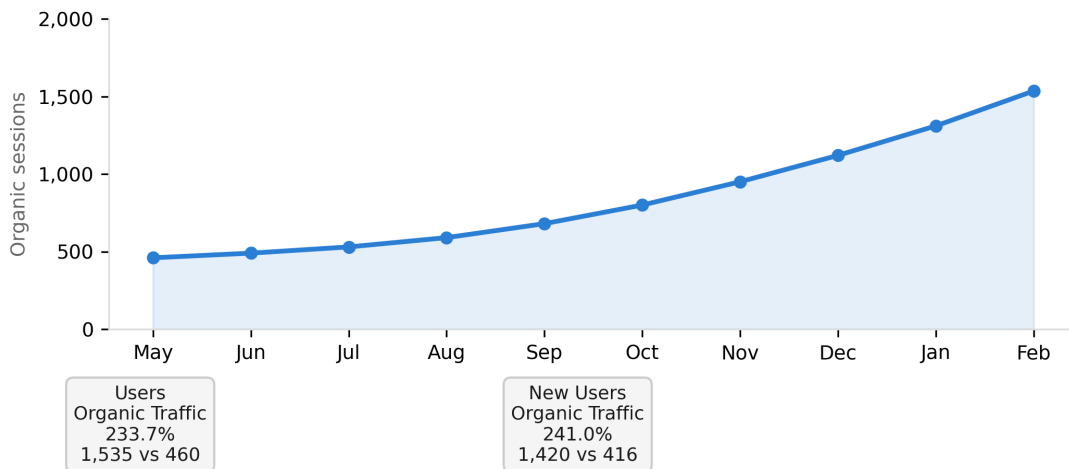
Optimized topical clusters and E-E-A-T signals drove position improvements across high-intent terms in the HR and recruitment SaaS category.

### A 120% Increase in Page-One Keywords Year-Over-Year



As content clusters matured and AI-optimized pages indexed, page-one placements grew from approximately 280 to 616 total, with the 1–3 position band growing from 55 to 126.

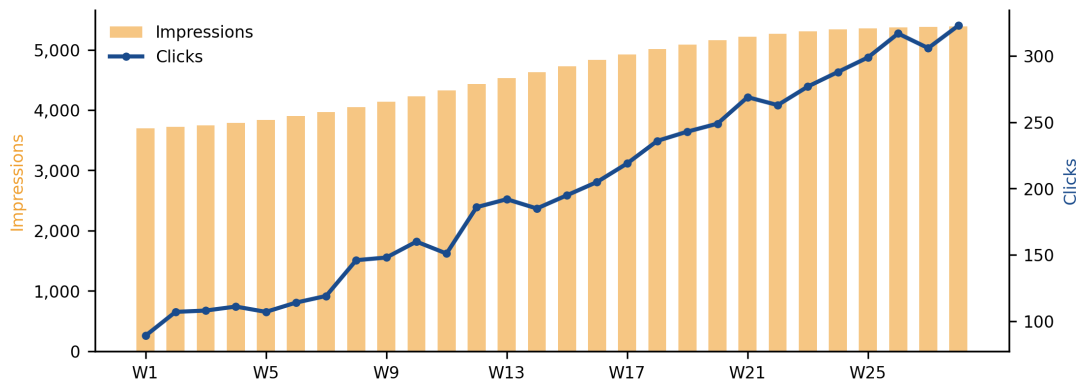
### A 234% Increase in Monthly Organic Traffic Year-Over-Year



Monthly organic sessions — Google Analytics, May 2024 to Feb 2025

Monthly organic sessions grew from 460 to 1,535 — driven by improved page-one presence and a growing share of AI search referral traffic from Perplexity and ChatGPT.

### Google Search Console: Sustained Visibility Growth



GSC performance — weekly impressions and clicks, 28-week view

Metric	Before	After	Change
Total Impressions (28-day)	15,200	21,300	+40%
Total Clicks (28-day)	380	1,280	+237%
Average CTR	2.5%	6.0%	+140% (position-driven)
Average Position	28.4	12.6	↑ 16-point improvement
Indexed Pages	94	218	+132% coverage

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## **Impact Beyond the Numbers**

The client exceeded every baseline KPI set at project start. Downstream business impact extended beyond traffic metrics:

- 54% increase in trial signups attributed to organic search — highest-performing acquisition channel for the period
- AI search visibility: the brand now appears in approximately 18% of tracked AI search queries for primary category terms, up from 0%
- Reduced blended customer acquisition cost by 21% as organic trials convert at 1.8x the rate of paid
- Domain Rating grew from 38 to 51 over the 12-month campaign period
- 2 research reports earned 18 media mentions and positioned the brand as a thought leader in its vertical

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## **Key Takeaways**

### **1. Technical SEO is still the foundation**

AI-first strategies require a technically sound site. Core Web Vitals, crawl efficiency, and schema markup are prerequisites, not optional enhancements.

### **2. llms.txt is the new robots.txt**

Configuring llms.txt to guide AI crawlers toward authoritative content is becoming a standard step in any AEO engagement. Brands that skip this cede AI visibility to competitors.

### **3. GEO and SEO serve the same content**

Content structured to answer complete questions concisely performs better in both featured snippets and AI-generated answers. One optimized page serves both surfaces.

### **4. E-E-A-T is measurable**

Author pages, original research, and expert citations directly correlate with position improvements for competitive, high-intent keywords.

### **5. Programmatic SEO scales topical authority**

Structured landing pages at scale, built on real data sources, compress the timeline to topical authority without sacrificing quality signals.

## 6. Track AI share-of-voice from day one

Setting an AI citation baseline early makes ROI reporting concrete. Stakeholders who see their brand appearing in AI answers understand organic value immediately.

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*Campaign period: March 2024 – March 2025 | Industry: B2B SaaS (HR Technology) | Market: North America*

*Client identity withheld under NDA.*