

Home Depot - Now Building People



About Home Depot

- www.homedepot.com
- Home improvement retailer
- Operates 2,200+ retail stores in all 50 states and internationally

Goals

- Have a standard to which the SEO team could be held accountable
- Invest in the team through career development and certification

Approach

- 12 person SEO team had 4 months of self paced access
- Team had access to cross-training in 8 different disciplines

Results

- Whole team became certified in SEO and at least one to two other disciplines
 - Whole team qualifies for OMCP
 - Everyone is held accountable to the information in the course, which marketers found more comprehensive than expected
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The hunt for a standard

Head of SEO & Senior Manager, Sean Kainec, knew training would give him a baseline to hold the whole team accountable to and help him manage more effectively.

Still, adding a task to his already overburdened team was not taken lightly. Sean evaluated multiple training options - including live or in house training. Ultimately, he landed with Market Motive for the flexibility, faculty, and certifications.

“One of the things I like most is it was accessible 24 hours a day. . . It gave us the flexibility and freedom we needed. People could do it on their own time or their own pace. If they wanted to do it from home, or if they were traveling and wanted to do it from the airport, they could.”

“The certification was a big determining factor. . . It’s good to be able to say we have those certifications. You can’t get that in most other places. I think another big factor is the faculty that is doing the training - Avinash and others that are considered top in their fields, so getting the information from them and knowing that it’s reputable was important.”

Prioritizing success

While the training would take time, Sean and his team couldn’t afford to drop everything else, so he gave a prioritization structure and clear expectations. Training came as fourth priority, but every member of the team was expected to complete the SEO training and at least two other disciplines.

“They have X, Y, and Z on their plate that are prioritized 1, 2, and 3, training came fourth - but I still made it an important priority. I held them accountable. It wasn’t something that they could get by. . . Training was important, we were paying for it, and that’s why I wanted them to get it done.”

Creating a levelset

In four short months, Sean’s whole team completed the SEO training,

most are certified in two other key disciplines, and all-star team member Freeman Setrana became certified in six. The twelve person team has earned 34 certifications, and Sean now has a set standard.

“We have people that are at all different levels of their career. Some people are one year in, two years in. Others have been in their careers for a lot longer but have only been in SEO for five to six years. It was a way for me to levelset and hold everybody to a certain expectation. When you’re managing, it’s really nice because you have an accountability level for your entire team. That was the biggest part for me.”

“For them, I think the nice part was they felt like Home Depot had invested in their careers. Training and continued education is a big deal, and that we invest that amount of money into them to give them skills - I know that they were really appreciative of that.”

More experienced SEOs required minimal training before passing their SEO test and gaining industry recognition of their abilities; others were able to increase and develop their SEO skills to reach that level and earn the certification; and all were able to expand their knowledge into the other disciplines.

“The most measurable thing for me is that people are finding it to be much harder than they thought it would be, and they’re getting more out of it than they thought they would. So the measurable benefit is it’s expanding them. It’s more challenging, and there’s more out there than they thought.” - Sean Kainec, Head of SEO & Senior Manager, Home Depot

Staying ahead of the curve

Going forward, Sean plans to continue to use Market Motive to keep his team updated on the latest and greatest.

“SEO is a field where there are the basics, but then there are the parts that change every year. A new algorithm change, or a new way of thinking about SEO and social, or a new way about link building. Or maybe it’s something that we don’t even talk about right now - we don’t even know it’s happening - but it’s going to be next year’s SEO thing. That’s what I would look to Market Motive to be able to keep up with: what is going on, what’s new, what’s in the future that we need to know about, and not so much the basics.”