

The untold secret  
to mastering

# SEO

- soft skills -





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SEO Consultant



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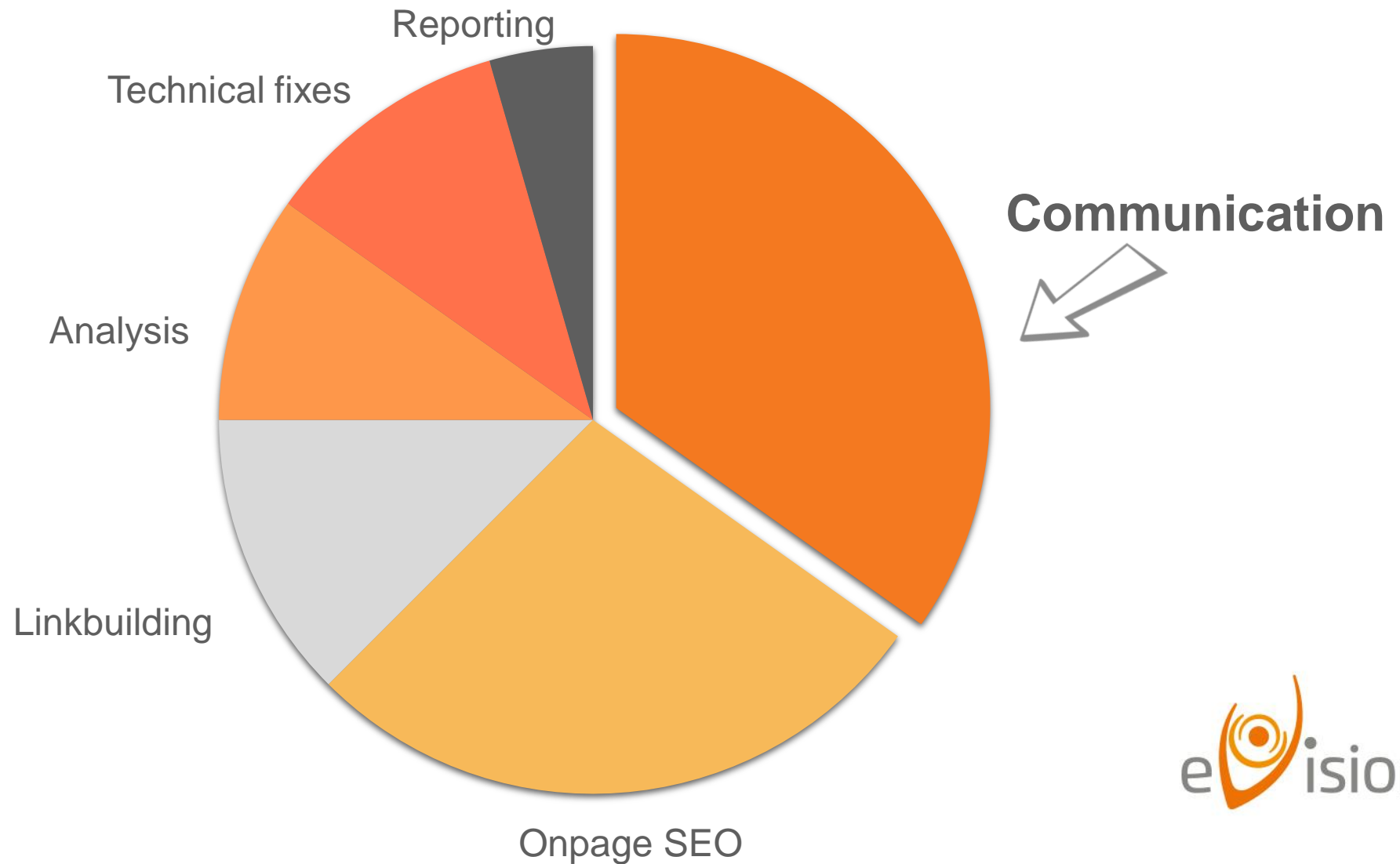




# The ideal SEO consultant...

- Knows and masters technical SEO (JS SEO, AMP, index optimization, crawl budget optimization...)
  - Link building
  - On page SEO (Content, image optimization, internal linking...)
  - Web analytics
  - Programming knowledge
  - Excel, tools (ahrefs, GSC, GA etc.)...
- 

# Distribution of work of an SEO Consultant



***“When your SEO work goes downhill, soft skills can save your ass.”***

- **1. Goal: understand why and when soft skills beat hard skills**
- **2. Goal: (how to) train these soft skills!**



# Worst-case scenarios for SEOs

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# The Situation

*What is the situation?*

***We don't have money for changes on the website in general, copywriting, link building, or for increasing media costs in general.***



**Situation: No Money**

**Solutions & skills you will need:**

**Persuasion  
& negotiating skills**



**Sales skills**



**Tenacity &  
assertiveness**



## Persuasion & negotiating skills



### *1. pick the right arguments and use magic words*

generally	CEO	CMO / Marketing Manager
free competition strong adjectives because we fix metaphors		

## Metaphors & analogies

it's hard to tell  
the difference  
between twins  
no wonder  
duplicate  
content  
confuses  
google



site**VISIBILITY**  
A division of AI Digital

[sitevisibility.co.uk/blog](http://sitevisibility.co.uk/blog)



## Persuasion & negotiating skills



### *1. pick the right arguments and use magic words*

generally	CEO	CMO / Marketing Manager
free competition strong adjectives because we fix metaphors	ROI costs time effectiveness revenue results budgets market share	leads visibility traffic cost per lead revenue per lead other marketing metrics

***2. prepare specific KPIs, required resources, and actionable plan for each type of decision maker***

**Marketing Manager / CMO:**

leads, conversions/conversion rate,  
CTR, visibility, traffic

**CEO:**

ROI and revenue  
% sales from campaign

### *3. Anticipate the questions and be prepared for them.*

#### CMOs and Marketing Managers:

- How many more qualified leads or traffic will this money bring us?
- What will this money do to increase our brand exposure?
- What is our competition doing?

#### CEOs:

- Why should we invest in SEO?
- Is this going to be profitable?
- When can we see the results?
- Do you have proven results that this money will achieve the goals?
- What are your KPIs?
- Why do we need to spend this much money?
- Why can't we just spend 80 percent?



**4. And don't ....**

*...accept too high KPIs*

*...be overly technical*



## Sales skills

- *Show your ideas and visions!*
- *Work with numbers & real data!*



## Tenacity & Assertiveness



***Don't lose your will !***



# The Situation

NEIN!

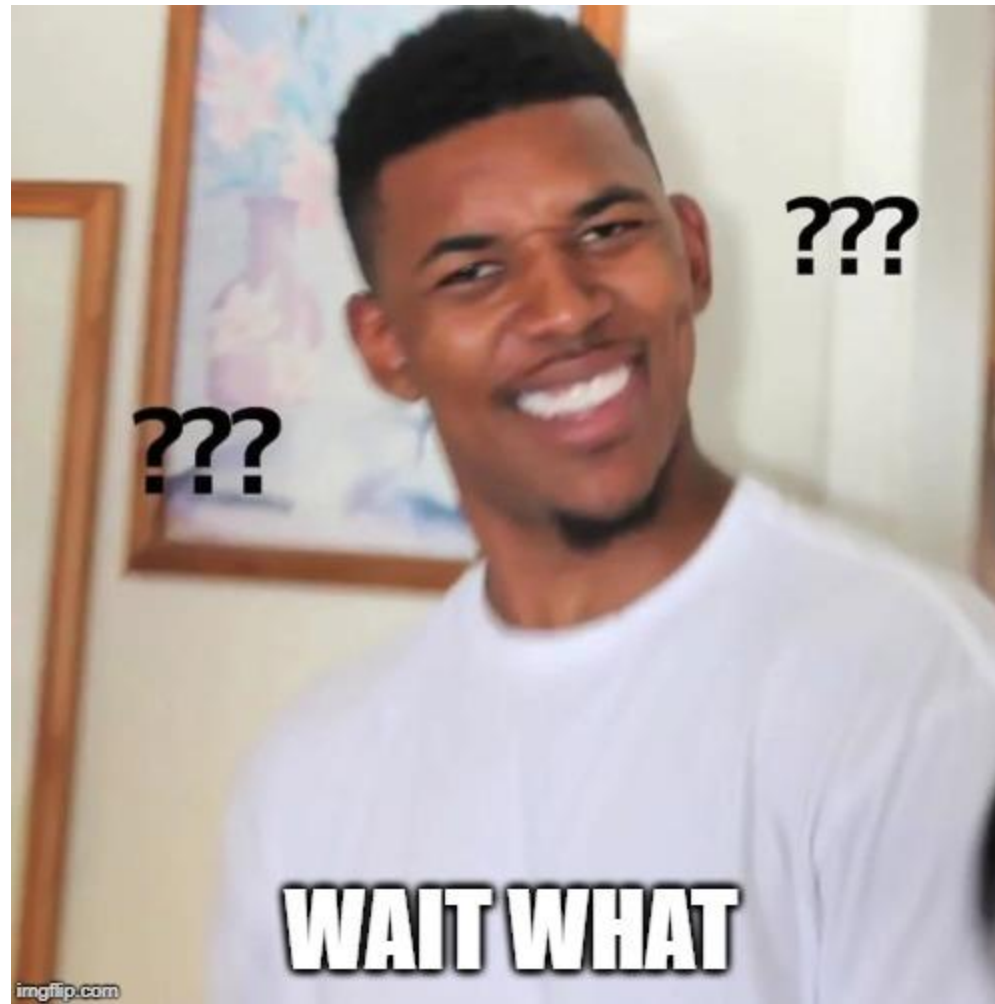
*What is the situation?*

- IT doesn't have capacity.



*...for the next 5 years.*

***..and we have a hiring stop,  
too.***



Situation: No IT capacity

## Solutions & skills you will need:

### Prioritization and realistic assessment

- *Rule #1:*  
Not all technical fixes will have the same impact. You need to prioritize.
- *Rule #2:*  
The bigger and more widespread the issue, the bigger the impact will be when you fix it.





## *How can I prioritize the SEO work?*

1. Crawlability (robots.txt, XML sitemap, noindex tag...)
2. URLs (404, duplicity...)
3. User Experience: internal links, page speed...  
(or watch [this vid](#) from Rand Fishkin “How to Prioritize SEO Tasks - Whiteboard Friday”)

***Not every page is an SEO  
landing page.***

## Prioritization and realistic assessment

*Extra tip!*



***Don't be afraid of talking about problems or things in general with IT.***



***Don't make plans without them!***



***Make you assignments as specific as possible!***

A black and white photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a suit and tie, sleeping with his head tilted back. An alarm clock is visible in the foreground, showing the time as approximately 10:10. The clock is a classic twin-bell style with a white face and black numbers.

# The Situation

*What is the situation?*

“  
We don't have time for SEO.  
”

**Situation: No time.**

**Solutions & skills you will need:**

## **Tenacity & Assertiveness**

- Propose different approaches
- Don't stop
- Remind the client
- Don't forget the task!

**Situation: No time.**

# Solutions & skills you will need:



## Tenacity & Assertiveness

- Propose different approaches
- Don't stop
- Remind the client
- Don't forget the task!

## Prioritization and realistic assessment

- Prioritize what is important
- Assess the situation correctly & execute tasks accordingly

## Patience

- Elephants move slowly 😊

A black and white photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a suit and tie, sleeping with his head resting on his hand. An alarm clock is visible in the foreground, showing the time as approximately 10:10. The image is partially obscured by an orange speech bubble containing the title.

# The Situation

*What is the situation?*

- “
- We don't have time for SEO.
  - We want the first results in 2 weeks.
- ”



**Situation: Results. Asap.**

## Solutions & skills you will need:



### **Teaching & listening skills**

- Educate your client about SEO
- Don't keep your precious SEO "secrets" to yourselves
- Quantify the activities which need to be executed
- Ask the client about their business



## *How can you train and improve teaching skills?*

- ✓ Practice client meetings with your friends or parents (who have no clue about SEO)
- ✓ Don't train with colleagues, they speak your language



## *How can you train and improve listening?*

- ✓ Try mentally echoing what the opposite is saying in your head.
- ✓ Wait a few seconds after they finish speaking before responding



# The Situation

*What is the situation?*

- **Over** communication: Clients provides (often useless) information
- **Poor** communication
- speaking with different departments
- **Crisis**, drop in search performance - how to explain it?

***“Problems in communication are usually a sign of underlying trust issues between agencies and clients.”***

## Solutions & skills you will need:

### **Communication & people skills**

- Create trust
- Make every consultant in the project speak with the client
- adjust language & vocabulary
- Be honest

**Situation: Communication**

# Solutions & skills you will need:



## Communication & people skills

- Create trust
- Make every consultant in the project speak with the client
- adjust language & vocabulary
- Be honest

## Listening skills

- Listen 3x more than you talk
- Get as much information as you can

## Political calculus & tactics





## ***Forge alliances:***

- Map out political terrains
- Audit the clients' team & understand complex team structures
- Get others on-side with you and trust you: How? make them look good in front of their boss 😊
- Work tactical: catch some low hanging fruits



## *How can you train and improve communication?*

### **Forming alliances:**

- ✓ Call the client → you can't rely on email, slack, teamwork alone to keep up-to-date with your clients


### **Getting close to people:**

- ✓ work from a client's office for a day or even a few hours
- ✓ Onboarding of the clients: make a workshop with new or existing clients - involving everyone relevant



## *How can you train and improve communication?*

- ✓ networking with people
- ✓ courses/lectures for call center/support people; sales
- ✓ Powerpoint karaoke (teambuilding 😊 )
- ✓ present something to your colleagues
- ✓ simulations and games



***“In the consulting world  
communication is the most  
important part of our work.”***



# The Situation

*What is the situation?*

## **Different expectations**

- *before* - about the pricing/budget, KPIs
  - *during* - results, workload

## Solutions & skills you will need:

### Communication skills



- set client expectations is early and often
- be detailed & persistent when it comes to communicating goals
- Be honest & transparent

Situation: Expectations

Solutions & skills you will need:

SEO & Project  
management skills



## SEO & Project management skills

- Structure your project
- Set straight who is doing what in your team
- Clarify what and how things are getting done
- Use tools for project management
- Check the presentation from Aleyda Solis from The Inbounder 2018 😊





**Situation: Expectations**

**Solutions & skills you will need:**

**SEO & Project  
management skills**



**Adaptability and  
flexibility**



## Adaptability and flexibility

- If a strategy turns out to be a flop, it's important that you know when it's time to course correct.
- One size does not always fit all with SEO.
- Adjust to the client and the changing environment

***Educate the client about SEO:  
They must understand the  
timeline of SEO services.***

# *Which skills do SEOs need?*

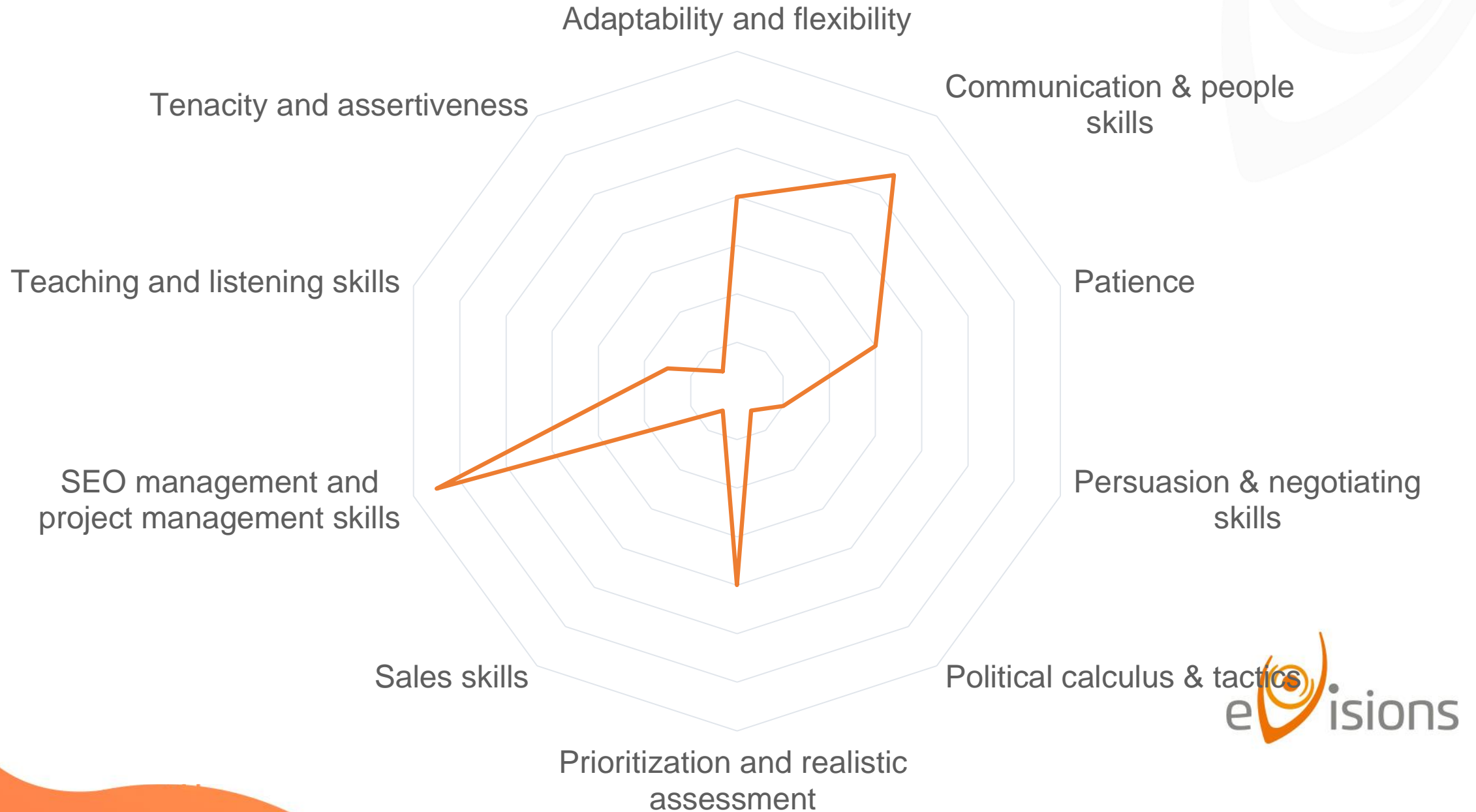
- Persuasion & negotiating skills
  - Sales skills
- Prioritization and realistic assessment
  - Patience
- Teaching and listening skills
- Communication & people skills
  - Political calculus & tactics
- SEO management and project management skills
  - Tenacity and assertiveness
  - Adaptability and flexibility



<https://bit.ly/2Fb3Phq>



# Which skills do SEOs need?



## *How can we train these skills?*

- **simulations and games** - Get your team together and let them re-enact the most common sales scenarios.
- **exchange** with colleagues, friends, freelancers
- Prepare better **onboarding** for your clients
- work from **client's office**
- Make **courses/lectures** for call center/support people; sales

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***When your SEO work goes  
downhill, soft skills can save  
your ass.***



Reach out!



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