



Competitor Playbook Part 3:

**Why confidence beats expertise and
how to train non-technical selling
digital marketing solutions at scale**



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Whilst your competitors are closing significantly more digital marketing deals, your talented reps are stumbling through technical conversations they're struggling to overcome.

We get it, you've hired sales reps who are brilliant relationship builders. But ask them to explain Core Web Vitals and schema mark up to an SMB owner, and they freeze up.

After working with digital marketing agencies over the past decade, we've cracked the code on why some teams consistently smash targets while others struggle.

Spoiler alert: it's not about training them up to be technical SEO experts, it's about building confidence. The agencies dominating your market right now have reps who don't know any more about SEO than your's do. But they have systems that make technical conversations feel effortless, and prospects trust them instantly.





The problem with learning by watching





Imagine learning golf by copying your friends at the driving range. One's got a long, powerful swing, the other hits short and sharp. Both are decent players, but their techniques couldn't be more different. You try copying both, but neither quite works for you.

That's exactly what's happening on your sales floor right now. Your reps are learning by watching whoever sits next to them, picking up random techniques that might not suit their style.

They're constantly second-guessing themselves because Sarah closes deals with technical deep-dives, whilst Tom wins with relationship building.

The result? Inconsistent performance and reps who lose confidence every time they face a question they haven't heard before.

Successful digital marketers provide their sales reps with a clear framework that works regardless of personality type. No more comparison, no more confusion.



The best sales teams we work with have cracked the code on balancing good sales structure with individuality. They align everyone around the same business goals and use frameworks to guide the process, but they never try to force every rep into the same mould. Tools like Insites empower reps to sell confidently in their own style, whether they're natural relationship builders or data-driven closers. The easy audits mean they don't have to master technical SEO jargon or spend months learning Semrush. When you remove the barrier of technical complexity, each person's unique sales strengths can shine.



Zoe Fletcher,
VP of Customer
Success at Insites



What you'll master in this guide

We've designed this specifically for sales leaders managing teams of 5+ reps selling digital services to SMBs. Here's what we'll unpack:



06



The audit-first method that gives your reps instant credibility (even with zero technical knowledge)



The 3-step translation framework that turns "you need schema markup" into "more customers finding you online with these fixes"



AI-powered follow-up systems close deals



Handling objection method



How to build team confidence through strategic feedback (not more training)



Why audits are your non-technical reps' best friend

The biggest confidence killer for sales reps? Not knowing what to say next.

Picture this: A hot lead finally takes your call. Your rep gets excited and spends 30 minutes crawling through complicated SEO auditing tools, finding technical issues like "low domain authority" or "poor keyword density."

They present these findings to the SMB owner, who responds with glazed eyes and "I'll need to think about it."

Deal stalled. Confidence crushed.

Your competitors are using smart tools and flip this script entirely.

Instead of drowning prospects in jargon, they use audits to qualify instantly, demonstrate immediate value, and support conversations with visual reports.

When your rep opens with "I've spotted three areas where customers are probably choosing your competitors instead of you," they immediately establish credibility and urgency.





Customise your audit focus

The agencies winning your deals focus their audits on what they actually sell. If you primarily offer local SEO and website optimisation, your audits should heavily weight local search visibility, Google Business Profile completeness, site performance, and mobile responsiveness.

Pro tip: Tools like Insites let you customise these weightings, so your reps always have relevant conversation starters that connect directly to services you can deliver.

Track what matters

Align audit usage with your KPIs: audit-to-call conversion, proposal conversion rates, which findings lead to highest-value services, and how audit usage impacts individual rep performance.

When your audit findings directly support your sales goals, reps gain confidence because they can see exactly how their efforts translate to results.

08



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Your SEO Audit

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The digital marketing translation framework

Your reps don't need to become technical experts. They need to translate technical concepts into business language that SMB owners actually care about.

Here's our proven framework that's helped agencies close additional deals worth millions over the past year:



Technical term → Business impact translation

SMB clients switch off when you mention technical terms. What they really care about is how these technical weaknesses damage their business.

Instead of this: "Your schema markup is incomplete."

Say this: "The code that helps Google understand your business details is missing, so when people search for restaurants like yours, Google shows your competitors instead."

More examples:

"Core Web Vitals" → "How fast your website loads. Currently, your website takes longer than recommended and loses visitors before they see your menu."

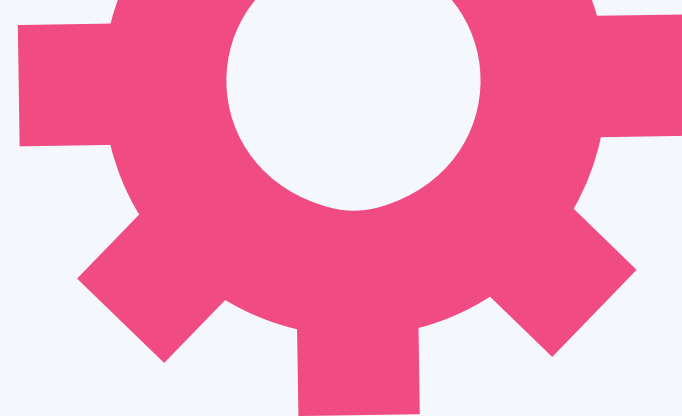
"Local citations" → "Your business listings across the web that help customers in your area find you. Using Insites [Local Grid](#), we can see how you compare for search terms in your area against competitors."

"Conversion rate optimisation" → "Making your website better at turning visitors into paying customers."

The 4-step explanation method

Many small business owners don't have deep technical marketing knowledge. The 3-step explanation method breaks it down into plain language they can instantly understand.

- 1 Provide a simple definition of the gap in their digital marketing score
- 2 Show don't tell (use the Insites audit to show real results and a competitor analysis)
- 3 Why it matters (business impact)
- 4 What happens with inaction



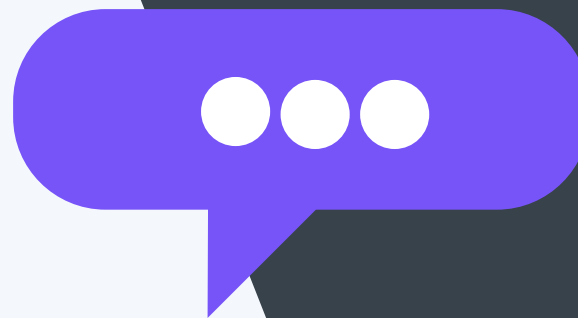
Example for restaurant: "Local SEO is all about how well your business ranks in your local area against competitors. Your online presence audit shows that your local SEO could be a lot stronger. Whilst you might have a strong word of mouth strategy with locals, when people are coming from other areas they will use search engines like Google Maps to find recommendations. Because you're showing up at the bottom, your potential customers are going to competitors. If we don't improve your local SEO, customers will continue to choose you're competitors over you."

First impressions count. A sales call that wows SMBs on the first call reduces time follow-up time and gets the deal done quicker."

Instead of capitalising on momentum, they send generic proposals that require prospects to piece together how the conversation connects to the solution.

Sales teams are missing huge opportunity when they don't capitalise on blowing SMBs away from the start. Instead they send generic proposals and wonder why they're spending so much time chasing.

Top-performing digital marketing providers discovered that by using personalised and easy-to-understand online presence audits that show SMBs exactly where they need help created so much more urgency. This led to the prospect being much more engaged and, the sales cycle was shorter and less time was spend on follow-ups.





The one-conversation approach that's closing significantly more deals

Nail the initial conversation by:

- Leading with an online presence audit that addresses their specific pain points
- Asking deeper questions about business goals and current challenges
- Creating urgency by showing what they're missing compared to competitors

Let the follow-up do the heavy lifting by:

- Summarising key points to show you were listening
- Connecting audit findings directly to solutions discussed
- Providing clear next steps and a timeline
- Including relevant case studies that mirror their situation

The one-conversation approach that's closing significantly more deals

Here's how your top performing competitors turn conversations into closed deals:

- Record calls (with permission) and use AI transcription to capture key points
- Create templates that automatically pull in audit data and conversation highlights
- Generate personalised proposals that reference specific concerns raised during calls
- Include direct links to audit results with annotated explanations



Example AI-generated follow-up:

"Hi Sarah,

Brilliant chatting yesterday about The Golden Oak's digital marketing goals. You mentioned three priorities: increasing weekend bookings, competing better with Pizza Express down the road, and improving those online reviews.

Our audit revealed some immediate opportunities:

- Your Google Business Profile is missing key booking features (Pizza Express has nearly a complete setup)
- Your website loads slower than recommended, which typically costs restaurants significant online bookings
- You have fewer positive reviews than similar restaurants in your area, which affects your trustworthiness that Google and AI search engines rely on when choosing who to rank

I've attached a proposal addressing these gaps, plus the timeline we discussed for results before your busy Christmas season.

Best, Tom"

This transforms follow-up from generic selling into strategic consulting that reinforces value.



How MCP transforms team coordination (without the tech headache)

- This is where Model Context Protocol (MCP) becomes your secret weapon, not as another complicated tool to learn, but as the invisible system making everything work seamlessly.
- Your competitors using MCP solve these coordination challenges by creating intelligent connections between your CRM, audit platforms, team communication, and project management.

What this looks like in practice

Scenario 1: Informed conversations

Instead of fumbling through tabs during calls, MCP instantly surfaces relevant audit data, competitor insights, and conversation history formatted for the specific client and sales stage.

Scenario 2: Seamless handoffs

When marketing passes a lead to sales, the rep immediately accesses every touchpoint, engagement data, and insight without manual data entry or lost information.

Think about what tasks in your sales process be could automated

It's possible with the Insites MCP integration. Reach out to us to find out more about MCP & how it can work for your organisation.

[Book a demo](#)

Objection handling: turn resistance into sales opportunities

With the right systems supporting your team, there's one skill separating good reps from great ones: turning objections into selling opportunities.

Nothing destroys confidence like being caught off-guard by objections involving technical concepts. But here's what winning agencies discovered: you don't need to script every response or become technical experts.

You need frameworks that work across scenarios whilst leveraging the data your systems provide.



Implementing objection handling with structured training

Weekly objection workshops (15 minutes max):

- One rep presents real objections encountered that week
- Team brainstorms responses using available data and tools
- Practice the framework until it feels natural
- Document successful approaches for future reference

Build your objection database: Track every objection by industry, business size, sales stage, successful responses, and outcomes. This creates an ever-improving library of proven responses.

- The confidence-building prep routine: Before each call, reps should:
- Review common objections for that industry
- Identify 2-3 key data points addressing likely concerns
- Have relevant case studies readily accessible
- Prepare powerful questions that reframe potential objections
- **Remember:** objections aren't roadblocks—they're requests for more information. Your job is providing the insight and confidence prospects need to make the right decision.

Give feedback that actually builds confidence

Now your team handles objections with confidence, the next piece is ensuring that confidence grows through meaningful feedback.

- Whilst competitors run generic check-ins, top-performing leaders transform feedback sessions into strategic development conversations directly impacting results.



What to focus on in your structured feedback sessions

1. What's working - celebrate specific wins and identify success patterns
2. What's unclear - address knowledge gaps before they impact performance
3. What's next - set clear, actionable development goals tied to business outcomes

Scaling feedback across larger teams

- Are you leading a team of multiple reps? Introduce buddy systems for peer coaching.
- Pair experienced reps with newer members, or match complementary skill sets.
- This creates multiple feedback loops and reduces manager burden whilst improving team cohesion.

Buddy systems enable:

- Real-time objection handling practice between calls
- Immediate feedback on audit presentations and client conversations
- Knowledge transfer of industry insights and successful approaches

Build consistent industry knowledge

Create weekly intelligence briefings (5-minute read):

Assign a senior team member to send internal newsletters covering:

- One major industry update and client implications
- New features or tools benefiting prospects
- Success story from another team member
- Quick tip for handling common objections
- Monthly deep dives on your specific ICP segments like industries or business size

Pro tip: This takes minimal time. Use Google Alerts, Inoreader, and AI tools like Claude or ChatGPT to create your news content.



Sign up to the weekly FiveInsites newsletter

Get your team subscribed to resources like the Five Insights newsletter, providing marketing professionals with current insights, algorithm updates, and practical tips.

When reps have fingers on digital marketing pulses, they position as trusted advisors rather than just service providers.

Subscribe

A decorative graphic at the top of the newsletter preview card features a purple zigzag line, a yellow circle, a green plus sign, and a blue curved line.

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Tackling ad fatigue and digital marketing challenges: Insights and small business spotlight



This week's 5 Insites delves into the problems marketers are facing. As you know, we are overwhelmed with research, technology and ideation! So, this week we aim help aspirational marketers and business owners understand and navigate the ever-changing marketing world. You are not alone.

Ad Fatigue - 91% of online consumers in the US are overwhelmed by too many ads on social media



Build a culture where confidence thrives

Confidence dies in silence. Culture brings it back to life.

When reps struggle with concepts, face difficult objections, or lose deals, their instinct is suffering silently. They don't want appearing incompetent or admitting uncertainty.

This silence is confidence poison. Unresolved questions become persistent doubts undermining performance.

Successful digital marketing teams create psychological safety where curiosity is rewarded and questions are celebrated.

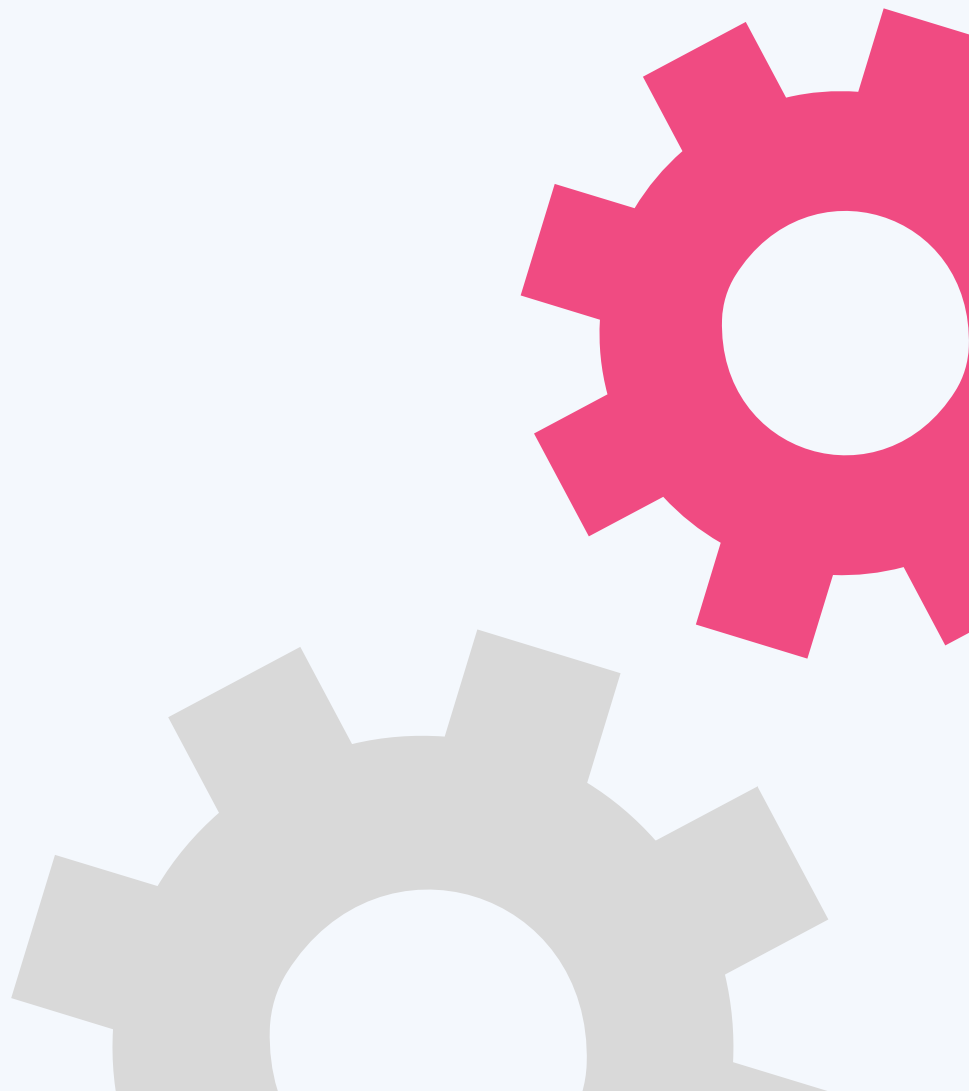


Building the foundation

Make learning visible: Celebrate team members asking great questions or admitting knowledge gaps. When leaders model curiosity and continuous learning, entire teams follow.

Share failures as learning opportunities: Create regular sessions where members share what didn't work and lessons learned. This normalises struggle and turns setbacks into team knowledge.

Recognise different strengths: Some reps excel at relationships, others at technical explanation, others at closing. Highlight different capabilities rather than expecting identical performance.



The compound effect

When confidence becomes team culture, it creates compound effects:

- Reps tackle challenging prospects trusting their support system
- Members share successful approaches instead of hoarding them
- New hires integrate faster feeling safe asking questions
- Client relationships improve because reps operate from confidence, not fear

The result? Teams that don't just hit targets but consistently exceed them whilst building genuine expertise and mutual support.

Ready to transform your sales team?

Your competitors aren't winning because they have better talent, they're winning because they have better systems, clearer frameworks, and stronger confidence cultures.

Every strategy in this playbook is already being implemented by digital marketing providers capturing deals you're missing. The tools exist. The frameworks are proven. The only thing between you and consistent sales success is commitment to making these strategies non-negotiable.

At Insites, we specialise in helping sales leaders like you transform their teams through our website audit platform. Our tool uses an easy-to-understand interface that generates colour-coded scores on any SMB's online presence, turning complex technical data into clear conversation starters your reps can use with confidence. Our customer success team works alongside your organisation to create a tailored process that fits your sales approach perfectly.

Ready to see how this works for teams like yours? The race is on, and your competitors have already started.

