

BENCHMARK METHODOLOGY \* NOT SAMPLE DATA

# 28-Retainer Benchmark Report - Methodology Pack

## READ FIRST

This pack documents HOW we ran the SEO vs Google Ads comparison across 28 KD Digital retainers in 2024-2025. It's a methodology document - a framework you apply to your OWN account data. The headline numbers in the blog post are anonymised aggregates we won't republish here per client NDAs.

## Selection criteria

28 retainers were chosen from a pool of 41 active accounts on the following filters: minimum 18 months continuous tracking, both SEO and Google Ads run by us (not split agencies), revenue tracking wired in GA4/CRM, B2B or DTC vertical, India / SE Asia / AU markets.

## Data sources

- Google Ads: cost, clicks, conversions, conversion value (per GA4-imported event).
- GSC: clicks, impressions, average position, CTR, queries (top-1000 export).
- GA4: sessions, engaged sessions, conversions, conversion value, attribution model = data-driven.
- Server-side payment confirmation (Stripe/Razorpay) cross-checked against GA4 conversion value to detect under-counting.
- First-party cookie + email-form CRM (HubSpot or custom) for B2B lead tracking.

## Calculation framework - applied to YOUR account

### 1. Total cost of channel (12 months)

SEO cost = retainer fees + content production + tools + amortised build-once (e.g. site rebuild). Google Ads cost = ad spend + agency management fee + landing-page production + amortised conversion-tracking setup.

### 2. Total revenue from channel (12 months)

Use last-non-direct-click attribution at minimum; data-driven if you have it. If you only have Google Ads conversion data: trust the post-click conversions as the FLOOR; double them as a working ceiling. For SEO use GSC clicks \* (CRM-derived conversion rate of organic).

### 3. Cumulative payback curve

Plot monthly cost (negative) and monthly attributable revenue (positive). The crossover month is your channel payback. We saw Google Ads pay back in months 2-4, SEO in months 9-22.

### 4. Marginal vs average cost

Critical for budget decisions: ask not 'what's my CAC' but 'what's my CAC for the NEXT INR 1L spent on this channel'. Marginal cost on Google Ads tends to rise sharply once you exhaust brand + high-intent queries. Marginal cost on SEO falls dramatically after months 6-9.

## Output template

Use the seo-vs-ads-payback-calculator.xlsx in this kit to plug in your numbers. The chart it produces is the same shape we used in the blog post - your decision tree falls out of where the curves cross.