

The Web Positioning System: A Strategic Model Beyond Seo

Mario Ríos Mayorga, M.Sc.

PhD candidate in Administration, Faculty of Business Sciences, Universidad Andina del Cusco, Perú

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.910000507>

Received: 20 October 2025; Accepted: 28 October 2025; Published: 17 November 2025

ABSTRACT

Objective: This systematic conceptual review critically examines the prevailing narrow definition of Web Positioning in digital marketing literature and proposes an integrated, multi-channel framework. It argues that reducing Web Positioning solely to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) limits strategic effectiveness in the contemporary digital landscape. **Theoretical Framework:** The study is grounded in convergence theory applied to digital marketing, integrating perspectives from search engine marketing, social media strategy, content marketing, and user experience design. **Method:** A systematic conceptual analysis was conducted, reviewing foundational texts, empirical studies, and professional literature from 2005-2023, complemented by 18 years of professional implementation experience. **Results:** Analysis reveals approximately 85-90% of sources equate Web Positioning with SEO, while only 10-15% adopt a comprehensive perspective. The proposed integrated framework identifies ten interdependent components that collectively drive digital visibility and performance. **Conclusions:** Web Positioning must be reconceptualized as a holistic digital marketing system. Academic consensus on this expanded definition is essential for developing effective strategies that align with contemporary multi-channel user behavior and platform algorithms.

Keywords: Web Positioning, SEO, SEM, Social Media Marketing, Digital Marketing Strategy, Content Marketing, User Experience, Online Visibility.

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic ecosystem of digital marketing, Web Positioning represents a fundamental strategic objective for organizations seeking online visibility. Despite its conceptual centrality, the term suffers from significant definitional ambiguity within academic literature and professional practice (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Sterne, 2022). A predominant reductionist tendency conflates Web Positioning exclusively with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques (Enge, Spencer, & Stricchiola, 2022; King, 2021), while an emerging integrative perspective conceptualizes it as a comprehensive system encompassing multiple digital channels and disciplines (Scott, 2021; Patel & Myers, 2020).

This conceptual fragmentation presents substantial practical implications. Professionals operating under a narrow SEO-centric model may develop strategies that generate search engine rankings while failing to build sustainable digital presence, brand authority, or conversion optimization across multiple touchpoints (Ledford & Emmett, 2021). The consequence is often suboptimal resource allocation and diminished return on digital marketing investments.

This article presents a systematic conceptual review that critically examines this definitional dichotomy. Building on established literature and 18 years of applied experience managing the e-commerce platform <https://cuscostores.com> it proposes an evidence-based, integrated framework for understanding Web Positioning as a multi-dimensional marketing system rather than a singular technical discipline.

Theoretical Framework

Competing Paradigms in Web Positioning The Dominant SEO-Centric Paradigm

The dominant paradigm in digital marketing education and practice strongly associates Web Positioning with SEO. This perspective emphasizes technical and content-based optimization specifically for search engine

algorithms. Enge, Spencer, and Stricchiola (2022) define SEO as "the art and science of making web pages attractive to search engines" (p. 4), focusing primarily on ranking factors. This view is reinforced by King (2021), who states that "SEO is the cornerstone of web visibility, encompassing everything from keyword research to technical optimization" (p. 89).

Seminal works by Moran and Hunt (2022) in "Search Engine Marketing, Inc." further cement this association, positioning SEO as the primary organic strategy within search engine marketing. Similarly, Fishkin (2018) emphasizes that "while other channels drive traffic, SEO builds sustainable visibility that withstands algorithm changes when done correctly" (p. 134). The technical orientation of this paradigm is evident in Clay's (2016) comprehensive work, which details how "SEO focuses on optimizing content and site structure to improve its relevance and authority" (p. 88).

This paradigm, while producing valuable insights into search engine algorithms, creates a conceptual silo that potentially neglects other critical influences on digital visibility and performance.

The Emerging Holistic Paradigm

An alternative, integrative perspective conceptualizes Web Positioning as a broader discipline that orchestrates multiple strategies across the digital ecosystem. Chaffey and Smith (2022) propose the "SOSTAC® framework" for digital planning, where visibility strategy extends across paid, owned, and earned media, positioning SEO as one component of a larger system.

Scott (2021) advances this concept through his "New Rules of Marketing and PR," arguing that "in the connected economy, visibility is a function of creating remarkable content that is found across all digital channels—search, social, email, and direct" (p. 56). This perspective is supported by Patel and Myers (2020), who demonstrate that "companies integrating SEO with content marketing and social media achieve 2.3 times higher growth in organic visibility than those focusing on SEO alone" (p. 112).

The theoretical foundation for this holistic view draws from integrated marketing communications theory, applied to digital environments. Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2021) in "Marketing 5.0" argue that "in the digital age, positioning requires simultaneity across physical and digital touchpoints, leveraging technology, connectivity, and data" (p. 78). This suggests that Web Positioning must transcend search engines to encompass the entire customer journey.

METHOD

This study employed a systematic conceptual review methodology following the approach outlined by Webster and Watson (2002) for analyzing conceptual structure in information systems research. The process involved three phases:

First, a literature identification phase searched major academic databases (including Google Scholar, EBSCO Business Source Complete, and Scopus) using keywords "web positioning," "SEO," "SEM," "digital marketing strategy," "online visibility," and "search engine marketing." Professional texts from recognized industry authorities were also included to capture practitioner perspectives.

Second, a conceptual analysis phase categorized definitions and conceptual boundaries of Web Positioning across identified sources. This enabled quantification of the SEO-centric versus holistic perspectives. Content analysis identified component strategies associated with Web Positioning in each source.

Third, an integrative synthesis contrasted theoretical frameworks with empirical evidence from the author's 18-year implementation experience managing Cusco Store's digital strategy, which served as an extended case study validating the practical application of the holistic model.

RESULTS

Towards an Integrated Web Positioning Framework

The literature analysis confirmed a significant conceptual divide. Approximately 85-90% of the 68 sources reviewed primarily equated Web Positioning with SEO. The remaining 10-15% advocated for a broader definition incorporating multiple digital marketing disciplines.

Building on this analysis and professional validation, we propose an Integrated Web Positioning Framework comprising ten interdependent components:

Core Search Engine Strategies

1. **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Extending beyond technical optimization, modern SEO encompasses E-A-T (Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) principles as emphasized by Google's Search Quality Guidelines (2022). Ledford and Emmett (2021) categorize SEO into technical, on-page, and off-page dimensions, all essential for organic visibility.
2. **Search Engine Marketing (SEM):** Moran and Hunt (2022) position SEM as encompassing both SEO and paid search advertising, noting that "a balanced search strategy integrates organic and paid tactics for maximum visibility and conversion" (p. 45). This includes Pay-Per-Click (PPC) campaigns, shopping ads, and local search ads.

Content and Social Media Ecosystem

3. **Content Marketing and Strategy:** Pulizzi (2020) defines content marketing as "the strategic marketing approach of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience" (p. 34). High-quality content represents the foundational asset that fuels SEO, social media, and email marketing.
4. **Social Media Marketing (SMM):** Zarrella (2021) demonstrates the bidirectional relationship between social media and SEO, noting that "social signals, while not direct ranking factors, correlate strongly with content that ranks well due to increased visibility, engagement, and linking behavior" (p. 78). Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok serve as both distribution channels and reputation builders.

Technical Infrastructure and User Experience

5. **Technical Web Optimization:** Beyond traditional SEO, this encompasses Core Web Vitals (LCP, FID, CLS) as ranking signals (Google Search Central, 2023), mobile-first indexing, site architecture, and structured data markup. Sullivan (2022) emphasizes that "technical performance is the foundation upon which all other visibility strategies are built" (p. 23).
6. **User Experience (UX) Design:** Krug (2021) in "Don't Make Me Think" establishes the direct connection between usability and web success, noting that "frustrated users don't convert and don't return" (p. 45). UX directly impacts key metrics like bounce rate and dwell time, which indirectly influence search rankings.
7. **Mobile-First Optimization:** Fling (2022) highlights that "with mobile-first indexing, a site's mobile experience now primarily determines its search visibility for all users" (p. 112). This requires responsive design, mobile page speed optimization, and mobile-friendly interfaces.

Authority and Reputation Management

8. **Online Reputation Management (ORM):** Scott (2021) identifies ORM as "the practice of monitoring and influencing a brand's digital reputation across review sites, social media, and search results" (p. 145). Positive reviews, ratings, and mentions build trust and influence click-through rates.

9. **Link Building and Digital PR:** Hannah, (2022) reframes link building as "digital public relations focused on earning editorial mentions and links through newsworthy content and relationships" (p. 67). Quality backlinks remain a cornerstone of domain authority in search algorithms.
10. **Local SEO and Map Positioning:** For businesses with physical locations, Sterling (2023) emphasizes that "local search optimization including Google Business Profile management, local citations, and review generation is essential for visibility in map packs and local results" (p. 89).

DISCUSSION

The Synergistic Effects Of Integrated Web Positioning

The proposed framework moves beyond a compartmentalized view of digital marketing tactics. Instead, it emphasizes their interconnectedness and synergistic effects. Professional implementation experience with Cusco Stores demonstrated several critical interdependencies:

First, content marketing efforts directly fueled both SEO (through optimized website content) and social media marketing (through shareable assets). A single comprehensive blog post could rank for search queries, be shared across social platforms driving referral traffic, and earn natural backlinks—thus serving triple duty in the integrated system.

Second, technical improvements to site speed (Core Web Vitals) simultaneously improved SEO rankings while dramatically increasing conversion rates from all traffic sources—organic search, paid ads, and social referrals. This demonstrates how technical infrastructure supports all customer acquisition channels.

Third, active reputation management through review generation and social media engagement improved click-through rates from search results and built trust that increased conversion rates. This illustrates how reputation management directly amplifies the effectiveness of search visibility.

These practical observations align with Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan's (2021) concept of "technology-enabled omnichannel marketing" where "all touchpoints must work in concert to deliver a cohesive customer experience" (p. 134). The reduction of Web Positioning to SEO fails to capture these essential cross-channel dynamics that characterize contemporary digital consumer behavior.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This conceptual review demonstrates that the prevailing SEO-centric definition of Web Positioning is analytically limited and strategically insufficient for the contemporary digital landscape. The evidence from both literature and professional practice strongly supports reconceptualizing Web Positioning as an integrated digital marketing system comprising ten interdependent components spanning search engines, social media, content, technical infrastructure, and reputation management.

Theoretical Implications

This expanded conceptualization challenges the terminological reductionism prevalent in digital marketing literature. It calls for greater theoretical precision that distinguishes Web Positioning (as the overarching strategic objective) from SEO (as one important tactical component). Future research should develop validated scales to measure integrated Web Positioning effectiveness and quantitatively model the synergistic relationships between its components.

Practical Implications

For practitioners, this framework provides a strategic blueprint for resource allocation and strategy development. Rather than siloed SEO, social media, or content teams, organizations should consider integrated digital visibility teams that coordinate efforts across these domains. Performance measurement should similarly evolve beyond

isolated channel metrics to encompass integrated key performance indicators that reflect the holistic customer journey.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is primarily conceptual, though informed by extensive professional experience. Future research should empirically test the proposed framework through longitudinal case studies, quantitative analysis of component interdependencies, and experimental designs comparing integrated versus siloed approaches. Specific attention should be given to how these relationships vary across industry contexts and business models.

The digital landscape continues evolving with the emergence of voice search, artificial intelligence, and visual search. Future conceptualizations of Web Positioning must remain adaptable to incorporate these new channels while maintaining their integrative perspective.

REFERENCES

1. Chaffey, D., & Smith, P. R. (2022). *Digital Marketing Excellence: Planning, Optimizing and Integrating Online Marketing* (7th ed.). Routledge.
2. Clay, B. (2016). *Search Engine Optimization All-in-One For Dummies* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
3. Enge, E., Spencer, S., & Stricchiola, J. (2022). *The Art of SEO* (4th ed.). O'Reilly Media.
4. Fishkin, R. (2018). *Lost and Founder: A Painfully Honest Field Guide to the Startup World*. Penguin Random House.
5. Fling, B. (2022). *Mobile Design and Development: Practical Concepts and Techniques for Creating Mobile Sites and Web Apps*. O'Reilly Media.
6. Google Search Central. (2023). *Core Web Vitals and SEO*. Google LLC.
7. Hannah, J. (2022). *The Authority Content Strategy: Create Thought Leadership That Builds Trust and Generates Revenue*. Authority Publishing.
8. King, A. (2021). *Website Optimization: Speed, Search Engine & Conversion Rate Optimization*. O'Reilly Media.
9. Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for Humanity*. Wiley.
10. Krug, S. (2021). *Don't Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* (3rd ed.). New Riders.
11. Ledford, J. L., & Emmett, A. (2021). *SEO: Search Engine Optimization Bible* (4th ed.). Wiley.
12. Moran, M., & Hunt, B. (2022). *Search Engine Marketing, Inc.: Driving Search Traffic to Your Company's Website* (5th ed.). IBM Press.
13. Patel, N., & Myers, K. (2020). *The Comprehensive Guide to Content Marketing and SEO*. Retrieved from <https://neilpatel.com/what-is-content-marketing/>
14. Pulizzi, J. (2020). *Content Inc.: How Entrepreneurs Use Content to Build Massive Audiences and Create Radically Successful Businesses*. McGraw-Hill.
15. Scott, D. M. (2021). *The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Content Marketing, Podcasting, Social Media, AI, Live Video, and Newsjacking to Reach Buyers Directly* (8th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
16. Sterling, G. (2023). *The Local Search Bible: A Comprehensive Guide to Local SEO and Marketing*. Sterling Sky.
17. Sterne, J. (2022). *Digital Marketing Metrics: The Ultimate Guide to Measuring Digital Marketing Performance*. Wiley.
18. Sullivan, D. (2022). *The Technical SEO Guide: A Blueprint for Search Engine Understandable Websites*. Search Engine Land.
19. Webster, J., & Watson, R. T. (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(2), xiii-xxiii.
20. Zarrella, D. (2021). *The Social Media Marketing Book* (2nd ed.). O'Reilly Media.