

Generative Engine Optimization | Case Study

2. Walker Sands



Why they stand out:

- Based in Chicago and flagged as a "leading integrated marketing communications agency"
- Particularly relevant for you if you stay in Chicago (more relevant for you if you stay in Chicago)
- Things to check for you:
- Ensure their B2B tech/CPG or professional-services clients are well-served

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AI Overview

Outcome-based marketing is a data-driven strategy that focuses on specific, measurable results like sales or qualified leads, rather than just activity. It shifts the financial risk from the brand to the marketing agency based on actual performance, and uses technology to continuously optimize for the desired outcomes.

Key principles

- **Focus on results:** Instead of tracking metrics like impressions or clicks, the focus is on tangible business outcomes, such as pipeline influence, customer acquisition, creation, and deal velocity.

Pay-for-performance: Marketers often pay partners only when specific results are achieved, such as a customer acquisition or a qualified lead. This aligns incentives and ensures partners to deliver real results.

Customer-centric: The strategy is built around understanding the customer's needs and goals, providing a more valuable solution.



Walker Sands

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en-US">
<head>
  <meta charset="UTF-8" />
  <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0">
  <meta name="robots" content="index, follow">
  <style>img{is([size="auto" i
  <!-- This site is optimized with
  <meta name="description" content="Walker Sands is a leading integrated marketing communications agency based in Chicago." />
  <link rel="canonical" href="https://www.walkersands.com/" />
  <meta property="og:locale" content="en_US" />
  <meta property="og:type" content="company" />
  <meta property="og:title" content="Walker Sands" />
  <meta property="og:description" content="Walker Sands is a leading integrated marketing communications agency based in Chicago." />
  <meta property="og:url" content="https://www.walkersands.com/" />
  <meta name="twitter:card" content="summary" />
  <meta name="twitter:site" content="@walkersands" />
  <meta name="twitter:creator" content="@walkersands" />
```



The Situation

In late 2024, we launched the Walker Sands website to align our digital strategy with new OBM-driven messaging. After the launch, we saw a sharp decline in organic traffic, which underscored the need to rebuild visibility and momentum for focus keyword prompts and phrases.

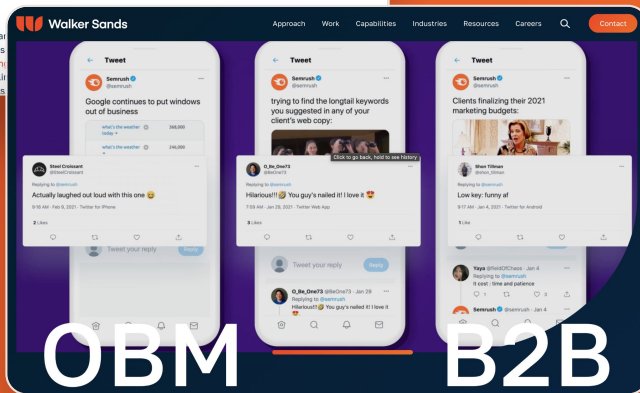
Outcome-based Marketing (AKA OBM)

OBM is your B2B secret sauce – a unique marketing philosophy and approach that leads with your desired business outcome. Before we consider specific channels, tactics and deliverables, we start with your North Star business objective, and then everything else follows.

Let's think about the big picture.



Most major business according to scrambling business





The Situation

In 2025, we expanded our focus beyond traditional SEO to embrace GEO, working to optimize content for discoverability within AI and answer engines. This meant building intent-driven, semantically rich content, integrating AI-ready metadata and schema and positioning Walker Sands as a holistic B2B growth partner.

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@id": "https://www.walkersands.com/capabilities/digital-marketing/generative-engine-optimization/",
  "@type": "WebPage",
  "about": [
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      "@type": "Thing",
      "name": "Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)",
      "description": "Artificial intelligence optimization (AIO) or AI optimization is a technical discipline concerned with optimizing content for discoverability within AI and answer engines.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence_optimization"]
    },
    {
      "@type": "Thing",
      "name": "SEO",
      "description": "Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the quality and quantity of website traffic to a website or a web page from search engines.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine_optimization"]
    },
    {
      "@type": "Thing",
      "name": "B2B marketing",
      "description": "Business-to-business (B2B or, in some countries, BtoB or B4B) refers to trade and commercial activities between businesses.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business-to-business"]
    }
  ],
  "mentions": [
    {
      "@type": "Thing",
      "name": "ChatGPT",
      "description": "ChatGPT is a generative artificial intelligence chatbot developed by OpenAI and released on November 30, 2022.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ChatGPT"]
    },
    {
      "@type": "Thing",
      "name": "Perplexity",
      "description": "Perplexity AI, Inc., or simply Perplexity, is an American privately held software company offering a search engine.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perplexity_AI"]
    },
    {
      "@type": "Thing",
      "name": "Claude",
      "description": "Claude is a family of large language models developed by Anthropic. The first model, Claude, was released on February 14, 2023.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_(language_model)"]
    },
    {
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      "name": "Large Language Models (LLMs)",
      "description": "A large language model (LLM) is a language model trained with self-supervised machine learning on a large corpus of text.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Large_language_model"]
    },
    {
      "@type": "Thing",
      "name": "AI-powered search",
      "description": "Search experiences enhanced by artificial intelligence and generative models that reshape how users find information.",
      "sameAs": ["https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generative_artificial_intelligence"]
    }
  ]
}
</script>
```



The Situation

Walker Sands had a strong legacy of established visibility and momentum around our focus keyword prompts and phrases. In 2025, we expanded our focus beyond traditional SEO to embrace GEO, working to optimize content for discoverability within AI and answer engines.

While SEO laid the groundwork through improved technical health and keyword alignment, GEO became the next evolution through:

- Building intent-driven, semantically rich content
- Integrating AI-ready metadata and schema
- Positioning Walker Sands as a holistic B2B growth partner.

```
1 <!DOCTYPE html>
2 <html lang="en-US">
3 <head>
4   <meta charset="UTF-8" />
5   <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1.0" />
6   <meta name="robots" content="index, follow, max-image-preview:large" />
7   <style>img:is([sizes="auto" i], [sizes^="auto," i]) { contain: layout 1; }</style>
8
9   <!-- This site is optimized with the Yoast SEO plugin v25.1.1 - https://yoast.com/faq -->
10  <meta name="description" content="Walker Sands is a B2B integration firm helping companies grow their business through strategic partnerships." />
11  <link rel="canonical" href="https://www.walkersands.com/" />
12  <meta property="og:locale" content="en_US" />
13  <meta property="og:type" content="website" />
14  <meta property="og:title" content="Walker Sands | B2B Integration Firm" />
15  <meta property="og:description" content="Walker Sands is a B2B integration firm helping companies grow their business through strategic partnerships." />
16  <meta property="og:url" content="https://www.walkersands.com/" />
17  <meta property="og:site_name" content="Walker Sands" />
18  <meta property="article:modified_time" content="2025-08-20T13:00:00" />
19  <meta property="og:image" content="https://www.walkersands.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Walker-Sands-Logo.png" />
20  <meta property="og:image:width" content="768" />
```



Our Approach

We pivoted to GEO as the foundation of our digital strategy, recognizing that future visibility depends on how AI systems interpret and represent our brand, not just how we rank.

We rebuilt our site and content through a GEO-first framework:

Technical foundation

Implemented structured headers, page tagging and schema markup to help AI models understand content hierarchy and relationships.

Content strategy

Created semantically rich, intent-based content optimized for both human searchers and AI retrievers.

Authority building

Amplified leadership thought pieces, earned media and awards to strengthen expertise signals across human and AI audiences.

Performance optimization

Enhanced crawlability, fixed technical issues, improved load times and expanded long-tail, conversational keyword coverage.

By integrating GEO across technical, editorial and authority layers, we built a proactive visibility strategy that is designed for how algorithms read, learn, and respond in an AI-driven world.

Program Results

Redefined visibility across traditional and AI-driven search:

+108%

AI referral traffic

(1,055 → 2,189 sessions; 1,596 from ChatGPT)

+96%

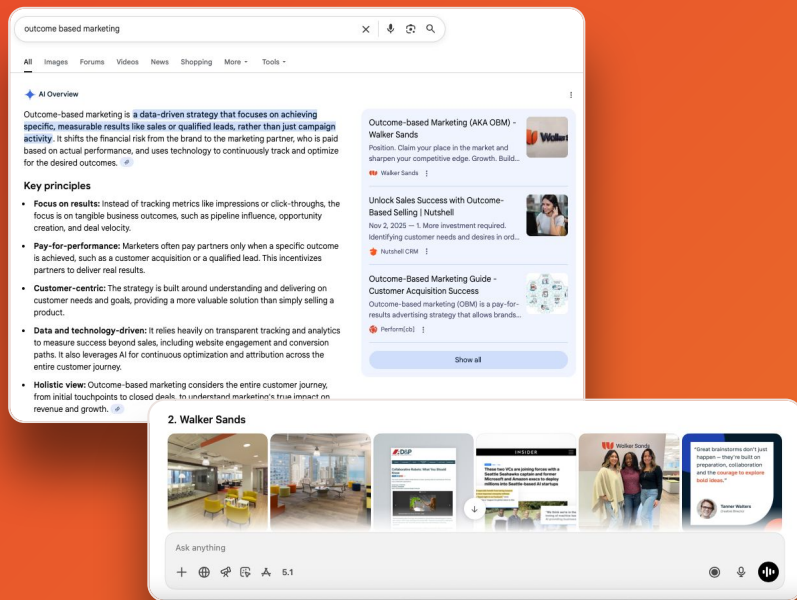
Engaged sessions

(582 → 1,139)

+41%

Key events

signaling stronger visibility and higher-quality engagement



Program Results

Established measurable authority in generative results:

