



fast forward delivery

## **GWS Case Study:**

### **SIS Site Gets Dramatic SEO Results in 4 Months By Mel Harkrader Pine, WSI Internet Consultant**

Great-Circle Technologies (GCT) is a small but rapidly growing firm in the Washington, DC area that consults for government agencies on geospatial intelligence. This is a highly competitive field that's in great demand in this post-9/11 era. GCT had only a domain name, [www.great-circletech.com](http://www.great-circletech.com), and an under-construction page through the end of 2003. The president decided that the firm needed a significant web presence, in part because it was considering becoming a technology reseller and in part to improve its image among potential employees and larger consulting companies that might hire GCT as a subcontractor.

Although it's clear that search engines are not a direct source of clients for GCT, the firm's placement in search engines is important to the president in part for prestige and in part as an aid in hiring, a crucially important element of his business.

We built a GWS Scalable Internet Solution (SIS) for GCT, using a quick-start design that was especially appropriate for the firm's name and its business. GCT's president was eager to get the site launched, even though we wanted to add more primary pages, so we launched it in late January 2004 with all dynamic pages, set up so that we could add more primary pages as well as secondary ones.

I was concerned that it would be difficult to get good search engine placement with an all-dynamic site, but in fact the results have been excellent. In May 2004, when the site was just four months old, it had a #5 Google ranking and its WebPosition report for 50 keywords on 28 search engines showed 57 first-place rankings, 156 top-5 rankings, 178 top-10 rankings, 192 top-20 rankings, and 206 top-30 rankings.

### **Reasons for Success**

Before we launched the site, the GCT president gave me a list of suggested keywords. Many of these were highly technical, but when I researched them in WordTracker I learned that they were not rare. I eliminated some very general words, like "imagery," and added a few related terms that showed up in WordTracker as good possibilities. Then, using the SIS content manager, I created keyword meta tags using various combinations of the keywords throughout the site and also entered the meta titles and descriptions. Even though the splash page had fewer than 150 words, I was able to work in many of the keywords – such as "geographic information systems," "remote sensing," "geospatial analysis," and "geospatial intelligence." I used the SiteSolutions Web Site Analysis tool to suggest improvements.

Once the site was launched, we added a "Careers" section, which has had as many as 12 positions posted.

What worked especially well here, in my opinion, was that the careers section is not built via a jobs database. The flexibility of the SIS enabled me to build the section with a separate, search-engine-optimized page for every position. It became a strategy of mine to use those pages to gain prominence with search engines. The name of each position (“geospatial SME,” “RADAR Image Scientist,” etc.) and some variations on it proved to be excellent keywords. They are, after all, important positions in a growing industry.

Although the position names don’t show up as keywords that are often searched on, it’s my educated guess that those pages help establish the site as one with depth – one that search engines perceive as having value.

Looking at the site’s Google backward links, it’s interesting that only one other site is shown as linking to [www.great-circletech.com](http://www.great-circletech.com). That one is the website of the Open GIS Consortium, of which GCT’s president is an associate member. The GCT site also links to it, and it has a Google #5 rating. But in addition to two pages on that site that are listed as linking to the GCT site, there are more than 20 additional backward links shown, all of them pages of the GCT website.

So it would seem that far from being a handicap, the dynamically generated pages in the SIS may be a plus for the site. Not only did they allow me to build a career section with a page and meta tags for every position, but Google appears to recognize the pages as links.

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