



# Answer Engine Optimization

The Definitive Guide and Playbook for LLM Visibility

**AEO** *(noun)*

**Answer Engine Optimization:**

Optimizing your brand’s content and presence to show up as a trusted source in AI-generated answers across tools like ChatGPT and Perplexity.

*Synonyms: LLM SEO, AI Search Optimization (AI SEO), Generative Engine Optimization (GEO)*

When people want answers today, they’re not always typing keywords into Google. They’re opening ChatGPT, Perplexity, or Bing Chat and asking full, natural-language questions.

Nearly **1 in 4** Americans prefer ChatGPT over Google.



That shift from search queries to AI conversations changes the entire playbook for visibility.

Ranking on Google isn’t enough anymore. To show up where your customers are looking, your brand needs to be part of AI-generated answers. That’s where Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) comes in.

This guide walks you through exactly how to make that happen with clear steps, checklists, and actionable advice. If you’re serious about staying visible in an AI-first world, this is where you start.

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# Is It Time to Prioritize AEO?

Not every business needs to pivot to AI-first search overnight. But if AI tools are already shaping how people discover products in your space, it's time to lay the groundwork.

This checklist will help you decide.

## ✔ Are Your Customers Using AI?

Before investing in AEO, find out how actively your audience is using AI tools.

**Ask your audience directly:**

*"How often do you use AI tools like ChatGPT, Claude, or Perplexity for research or recommendations?"*

If 20% or more are active users  
→ AEO should be a priority



If only 1% have heard of ChatGPT →  
You can deprioritize for now

## ✔ Are You Hearing Organic Mentions of AI?

AI-driven discovery often shows up before it's measurable.

**Look and listen for signals like:**

- > New leads saying things like "ChatGPT recommended your product"
- > Sales calls where prospects mention they "asked an AI" about your category.

Even a handful of these anecdotes show that AI is influencing your funnel.

## ✔ Is Your Industry Already Adopting AI?

Some sectors are moving fast. If you're in one of these industries, assume your competitors are already optimizing for AI-generated answers.

🛒 B2C Tech

🔗 Developer Software

💰 Finance & Fintech

☁ SaaS & Cloud Services

👤 Staffing & Recruiting

✈ Travel & Hospitality

📦 E-commerce

🏥 Health Tech & Digital Health

🎓 Education Technology (EdTech)

⚖ Legal Tech

🔒 Cybersecurity

## ✔ Are You Seeing AEO Signals in Your Funnel?

You don't need to guess. Track AI-related activity the same way you track any other marketing signal.

**Tactical ideas:**

- > Add "AI Assistant" as a lead source option in your forms
- > Ask on sales calls whether prospects used AI during research
- > Watch whether competitors are publishing AI-related content — or showing up in ChatGPT answers

## Your AEO Prioritization Scorecard

0 checks: You can deprioritize for now.

1 check: It's worth getting started.

2+ checks: **Make AEO a main priority – ASAP.**

**Bottom line:**

Don't wait until AI search is mainstream. If even a small but growing segment of your audience is using LLMs, now is the time to act.

The brands that prepare early will set the pace. And like any investment — AEO compounds.



# Mapping Conversation Volume

**conversation volume** *(noun):*  
The total frequency a brand, product, or category is mentioned across AI tools, search engines, and customer interactions—used to gauge visibility and relevance in digital discovery.

So, you’ve decided your audience is (or soon will be) using LLMs.

The next step is figuring out how much people are actually talking about you—or your category—inside AI search. In AEO strategy, this is known as conversation volume.

## How to Map Conversation Volume

Check Traditional Search Volume	Measure AI Conversation Volume	Listen to Your Customers
<i>Baseline demand</i>	<i>Hidden demand in AI tools</i>	<i>Real-world phrasing</i>
Use tools like Keysearch, Google Trends, or AlsoAsked	Use <b>Profound’s Conversation Explorer</b> or similar tools.	Review sales calls, support tickets, testimonials, forums, Reddit, and social media
Look up high-volume keywords related to the problems your product solves.	See how often people ask ChatGPT, Google AI Mode, or Perplexity about your space.	Look for the exact words people use to describe their needs and goals

## Turn Insight Into Action

This “map” shows you how much your audience is already asking about your space and where. Your AI conversation volume could already be 50% of Google’s search volume! Or maybe it’s smaller right now but growing fast month over month.

Either way, knowing the numbers helps you prioritize AEO with confidence and gives you the data to prove it’s a worthy investment to your high-level stakeholders.

### What it means for your strategy:

Don’t rely on search data alone. If your Profound Conversation Explorer report shows thousands of AI queries tied to your category, those deserve the same weight as high-volume Google keywords in your content strategy, if not more. AI-driven queries aren’t just less competitive, they’re often closer to the purchase moment. Prioritize them early.

## Conversation Volume Checklist:

- ✔ **Pull core search keywords.**  
Use SEO tools to identify top Google queries in your space.
- ✔ **Find your top AI queries.**  
Use Profound’s Conversation Explorer to uncover the most-asked questions in ChatGPT, Perplexity, etc.
- ✔ **Listen to your customers.**  
Review sales calls, webinar Q&A, community posts—anywhere real customers ask questions. Pay attention to how they actually phrase things.
- ✔ **Compare and prioritize.**  
Stack insights side by side. Highlight overlaps—those are gold. Watch for AI-only questions—they often signal emerging needs.
- ✔ **Estimate AI’s share.**  
Roughly gauge how much discovery is happening in AI vs. search. Even ballpark numbers can guide content focus.






# The One Question Your Forms Should Be Asking

Conversation volume tells you what people are asking out in the world. But “How Did You Hear About Us?” (HDYHAU) tells you who’s actually purchasing and how they got there.

This is the data that unlocks budget and buy-in.

When customers mention ChatGPT or another AI tool in your HDYHAU field, that’s no longer just a search trend. It’s real attribution, directly tied to conversions, and the kind of proof that gets leadership and sales teams aligned around AEO as a priority.

Often, a single quote like “ChatGPT recommended us” carries more weight with leadership than pages of search volume reports.

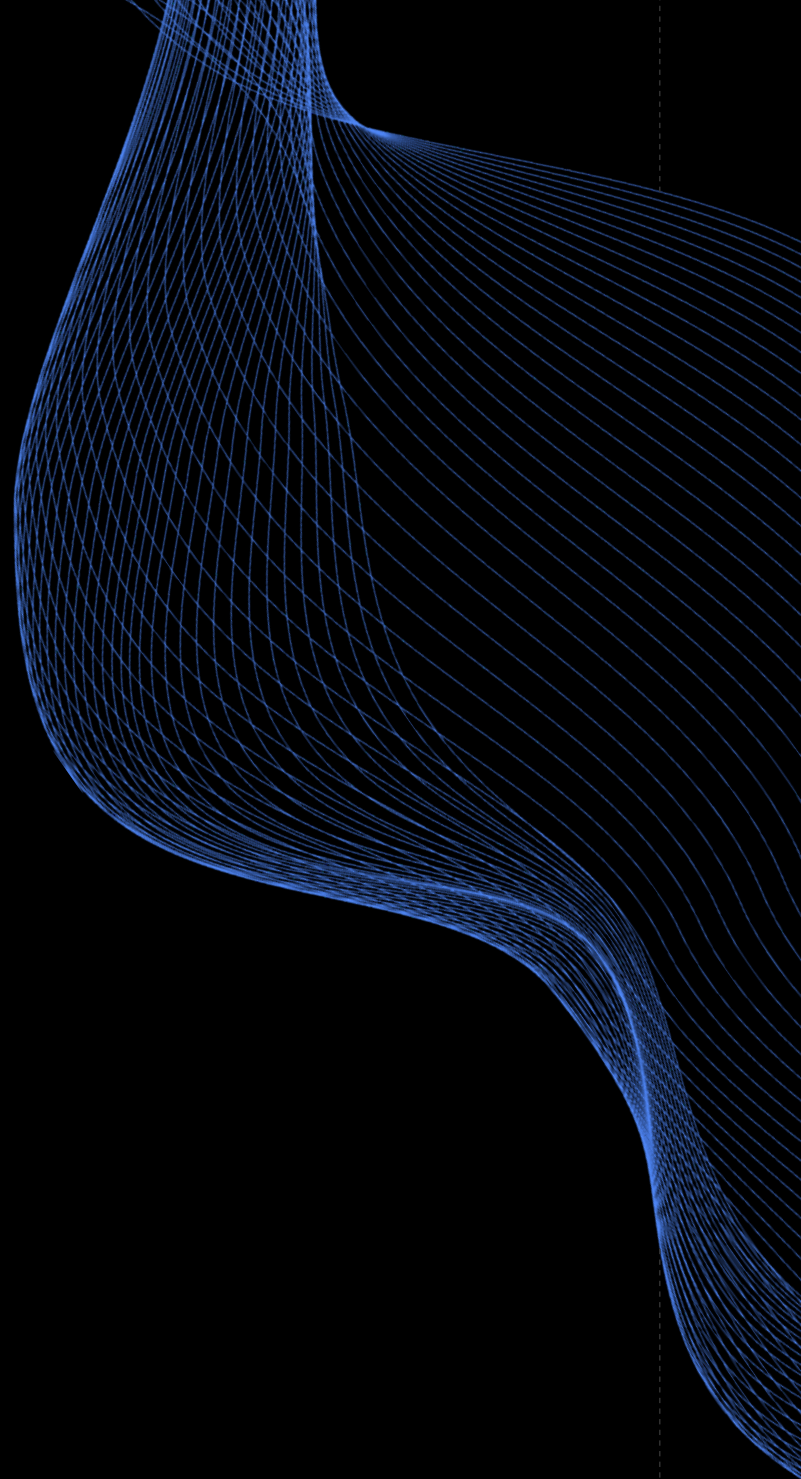


Roughly 1 in 8 brands using attribution tools now see LLM mentions in their ‘How Did You Hear About Us?’ responses – up more than 5× since January 2025.

HDYHAU

## Checklist:

- ✔ **Make sure you have a HDYHAU field.**  
Add it to your key forms if it’s missing.
- ✔ **Let customers mention AI tools.**  
Use open text or include an AI-related option so people can share where they actually found you.
- ✔ **Require responses.**  
You’ll get clearer insights with more consistent data. Do not make an optional field.
- ✔ **Track AI mentions over time.**  
Set up a simple tag system and monitor trends monthly. Build a CustomGPT to automatically categorize answers.
- ✔ **Share customer quotes with your team.**  
Real language like “ChatGPT recommended us” brings AEO’s impact to life—and helps justify budget and focus.

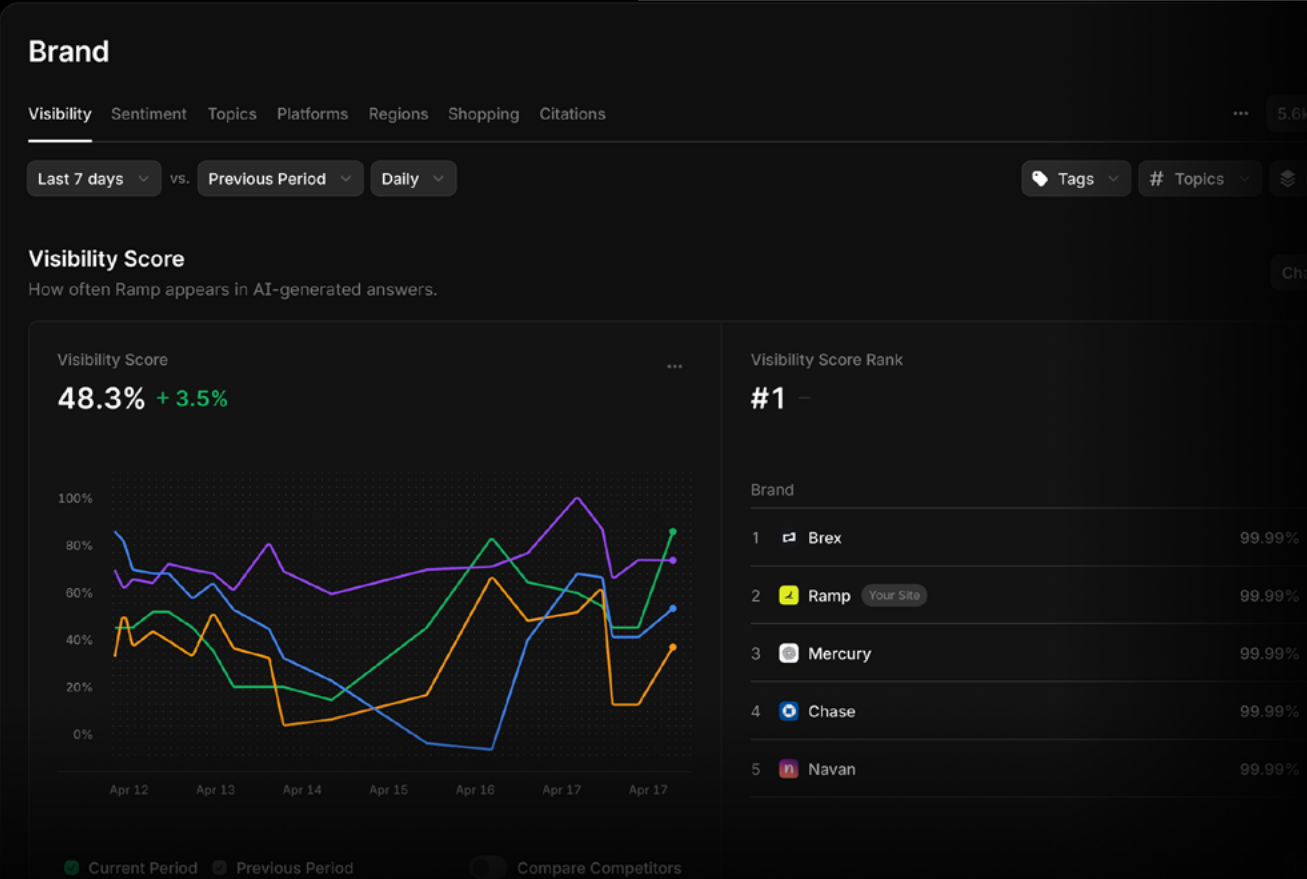


Before you start optimizing:

# Check Your Brand's AI Visibility

Before you can improve your visibility in AI answers, you need to measure your starting point. That means checking how often your brand already shows up when people ask AI tools questions about your space and how you compare to competitors. We call this your baseline visibility score.

**visibility score** (noun):  
The percentage of AI-generated answers that mention your brand.



## How to Benchmark Your Brand in AI Answers

### 01. Make Your AI Prompt List

*The questions that matter for your brand*

Write down 25–50 prompts your ideal customer might ask AI tools when looking for products like yours.

- Include:
- > Product or category recommendations
  - > Problem/solution queries
  - > Brand-specific questions

Not sure where to start? Tip: Pull ideas from SEO keywords, customer FAQs, or ask ChatGPT to generate prompt examples.

### 02. Test Across Major AI Platforms

*Where you show up—and where you don't*

Test your prompts on:  
ChatGPT   Perplexity   Microsoft CoPilot  
Claude   Gemini

- For each answer, log:
- > Does your brand show up? (Yes/No)
  - > How is it positioned? (Recommendation, passing mention, tone)
  - > Where does it rank?
  - > Which competitors get mentioned
  - > What sources are cited?

### 03. Calculate Your Share of Answer

*Your AI visibility score*

Example: If your brand appears in 10 out of 50 prompts, that's a 20% Visibility Score

You can track a competitor's Visibility Score too.

### 04. Document Your Findings

*Your starting point and proof of progress*

- Create a simple internal report (here's an example), organized by prompt and platform:
- > Your Visibility Score
  - > Competitor scores
  - > Key patterns or gaps

Once you've measured your baseline, you'll have a clear starting point. Maybe your brand shows up in just 5% of key AI queries while a competitor appears in 25% – a sign you've got room to grow. Or maybe you're showing up often, but with a qualifier like "best for small teams". It's all insight you can use to adjust your positioning moving forward.



# Set It as a Core KPI




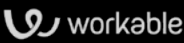



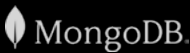








Don't treat Visibility Score as a one-and-done audit. Make it a core KPI just like SEO rankings or paid search performance.

Tracking your AI visibility over time keeps your AEO efforts accountable and shows clear progress. Those are the kind of stats that get leadership to pay attention. Plus, it motivates your team to keep optimizing.

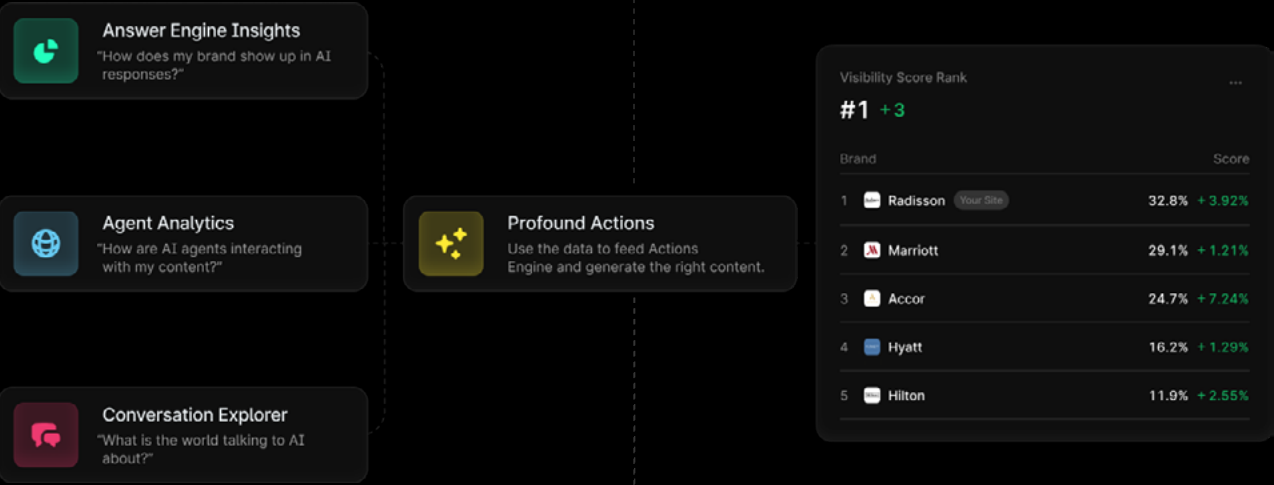
# Profound Makes Tracking Easy

Manually running AI prompts once gives you a baseline. But to track Visibility Score regularly – without eating up you (or your team's time) – you'll want an automated tool. Now's the time to start thinking about it.

Profound is the industry-leading solution, helping brands like Ramp, Indeed, MongoDB, and more.

## Here's a quick overview of Profound's AEO Platform:



### Answer Engine Insights:

Automatically track your AI visibility across ChatGPT, Perplexity, Microsoft CoPilot, Google AIi Overviews, Google AI Mode, Google Gemini, Grok, Meta AI, and Deepseek.

### Agent Analytics:

Log-level analysis of AI bot traffic to your website. Understand what pages are most frequently visited and how quickly your new content is picked up by LLMs.

### Conversation Explorer:

Access real-time insights into user prompts and questions across 40M+ topics. Understand what people are asking—and how often.

### Actions:

Actions combines three core data streams:

- AI search responses and citations
- Real user prompts
- AI bot traffic to your site

It helps you identify high-impact content opportunities and tailor content for maximum AI visibility.

For guidance on setting up ongoing tracking, see Section 9. For now, focus on getting your baseline visibility and selecting the tools that fit your workflow.

Baseline Visibility

Checklist:

✔ Create your prompt list.

25–50 questions your ideal customer might ask AI tools

✔ Run prompts across platforms.

Test on ChatGPT, Claude, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, and Gemini—or use an automated tool to track results.

✔ Log brand mentions

Note whether your brand appears (Yes/No), how it’s positioned, the phrasing used, and overall sentiment.

✔ Track competitors.

Record which competitors show up and how they’re positioned.

✔ Calculate your score.

What % of prompts mention your brand?

✔ Spot gaps and patterns.

Identify topics where you’re missing or a competitor dominates.

✔ Build your baseline report.

Share internally—this becomes your LLM visibility scorecard.

# How to Build a AEO-Ready Content Strategy That Actually Gets Found

Your old SEO playbook won’t cut it. Classic metrics matter less for AI visibility. Instead, focus on depth, clarity, and readability.

With AI flooding the web with generic content, the only way to stand out is with substance: **data, originality, and real customer language.**

“

LLMs don’t match keywords; they interpret meaning. Stuffing keywords or swapping synonyms has little impact if the content lacks substance.”

— Kevin Lacker,  
Director of Infrastructure at Vercel





## Use Real Customer Language

Forget keyword stuffing. Focus on the real questions your customers ask. Use your Section 2 research to build content around their actual phrasing.

If they ask, “How do I achieve X on a tight budget?”—make that your headline. LLMs prioritize natural, long-tail questions because that’s how people search.

## Build Your Content Moat: Lead With Data AI Can’t Find Anywhere Else

If you have exclusive data—use it. Internal analytics, anonymized trends, customer surveys—all offer an edge.

Original insights don’t just attract traditional backlinks – they’re exactly the kind of source material AI tools surface in answers.

For example, if a fintech brand publishes a study on consumer spending trends, that data could get cited in blogs, reports, and AI-generated responses alike.

**Bottom line:** don’t just recap what others say. Make your content the source others pull from.

## Publish Content AI Can’t Write

Don’t chase broad topics like “Ultimate Guide to [Topic]”. AI models have read thousands of those.

Focus on what only *you* can share:

- › *Proprietary data*
- › *Original research*
- › *Expert interviews*
- › *Niche deep-dives*
- › *Real case studies*

Example: Replace “Top 10 Email Tips” with “What 50 Campaigns Taught Us: Our 2025 Email Results.” Real data and unique insights stand out.

## Turn Old Content Into AEO-Ready Answers

Not every piece of content needs to be brand new. Your existing library might already hold value, you just need to refocus it for AEO.

Start by auditing what you have. Look for pages built around old-school SEO tactics instead of actually answering a question. Can you clean them up? Cut filler, add clearer summaries, and update any outdated data.

LLMs love content that is clearly organized:

- › *Tables*
- › *FAQ sections*
- › *Clear Question/Answer formatting*
- › *Ordered Lists*

You can also repackage high-value content into more conversational formats. For example, take a blog post and turn it into a Q&A article or an FAQ page – formats that better match how people phrase questions to AI tools.

## Draft with AI, Publish with Judgment

AI writing tools can help you move faster, but they aren’t a substitute for expertise. If you’re using AI to draft blog posts or landing pages, treat it like a rough first draft, not a finished product.

Always fact-check, edit for originality, and tighten up the language. LLMs can confidently write things that aren’t accurate or just surface the same vague points everyone else is publishing. And content like that won’t help you stand out in AI search.

When it comes to AEO, **quality beats volume every time**. A handful of well-crafted, authoritative pieces will get you further than a flood of AI-generated filler.



# Anchor Your Strategy Around Flagship Content

Focus your efforts on one standout piece of content each month.

Examples:

- > Research reports
- > Industry benchmarks
- > In-depth guides
- > Interactive tools or calculators
- > Customer surveys and insights
- > Expert roundtables
- > Frameworks, templates, or checklists

Promote these hard. They're the content AI is most likely to surface and cite.

One great piece outperforms ten average ones—and you can repurpose it into smaller social posts, webinar topics, and more.

AEO Content Strategy

## Checklist:

- ✔ Map top customer questions. Use Section 2 research to ensure each piece answers a real user query.
- ✔ Plan original content angles. Prioritize unique data, insights, and lived experience. Aim for one standout post per quarter.
- ✔ Audit and reformat existing content. Rework SEO-driven pieces to be more direct, structured, and question-based.
- ✔ Add summaries and takeaways. Make key insights easy to skim—for users and AI.
- ✔ Incorporate structured data. Use FAQ or HowTo schema where appropriate.
- ✔ Cut the fluff. Remove filler and consolidate redundant content.
- ✔ Tighten your editorial process. Fact-check rigorously. Make every piece accurate, clear, and cite-worthy.

# How to Structure Your Content So AI Actually Uses It

How you structure your content directly affects whether AI tools can actually find and use it. LLMs don't read like humans – they scan for chunks of information that answer specific questions. Instead of looking at your page as a whole, AI breaks it into pieces and grabs what's relevant.

That means every section of your content should stand on its own: clear, focused, and easy to pull as a snippet. And it's not just about the words. AI crawlers still have technical blind spots. They might miss content hidden behind JavaScript or messy code. Clean HTML matters.

Here's how to structure your content so AI can surface it and your brand doesn't get skipped:





# Make Answers Easy to Find

## Clear, Descriptive Headings

Headings are one of the strongest signals LLMs use to figure out what a page (or section) is about.

Use H2s and H3s that match real questions your customers would ask. Avoid vague or clickbait phrasing—be direct.

Examples:

- > *What Is ABC?*
- > *How Does XYZ Work?*
- > *Best Tools for Small Businesses in 2025*

Pull directly from your Section 2 research.

## Q&A Formats and Lists

FAQs and list-style content are AI favorites because they mirror how people search and ask questions.

Add FAQ sections to key pages. Format your lists using real HTML (`<ul>`, `<ol>`), not screenshots or graphics.

Examples:

- > *Top 5 CRM Tools for Small Businesses*
- > *How to Improve Email Open Rates:*
- > *3 Proven Steps*

## One Idea Per Section

One question = one section or paragraph. Avoid blending multiple ideas in the same block.

Think FAQ-style:

- > *One clear heading*
- > *One direct answer*
- > *Supporting context below if needed*

Why? AI often pulls one chunk of text. Make that chunk count.

## Start with the Answer

LLMs prioritize direct, clear answers. Always lead with the takeaway.

**First sentence** = the quick fact or direct response.

**Rest of the section** = context, examples, or supporting detail.

Think featured snippet format:  
“ABC is [plain definition].”  
Followed by a more detailed explanation.

Even if AI only pulls that first sentence, your brand shows up with a clear, helpful response.

# Make Sure AI Can Actually Read It

AI tools only see what’s in the raw page source. If something’s hidden behind scripts, graphics, or fancy layouts, it might as well not exist.

## Real Tables, Charts, and Structured Data

Use proper HTML tags: `<table>`, `<tr>`, `<th>`, `<td>`.

Wrap visuals with `<figure>` and `<figcaption>`.

Write descriptive alt text (what the chart shows, not just how it looks)

Avoid screenshots of tables, charts as images with no description, or data only visible after a click.

## Keep Content in the Raw HTML

LLMs don’t scroll or run scripts. If content isn’t in the initial page load, it may be skipped.

Use server-side rendering or static HTML

Avoid infinite scroll or JavaScript-triggered content

Check [robots.txt](#) and allow key bots like GPTBot and BingPreview

View your page source—if content’s missing there, AI can’t see it

## Semantic HTML and Schema Markup

Clean HTML helps LLMs understand structure.

Use proper tag hierarchy:

`<h1>` for titles  
`<h2>`, `<h3>` for sections

Wrap content in semantic tags:  
`<article>`, `<section>`, `<nav>`, `<aside>`

Add structured data (schema markup):  
[FAQPage](#), [HowTo](#), [Article](#), [Product](#)

Don’t handle code? Make sure your web or SEO team knows: this is now part of your AEO checklist—not just SEO.



# Make Every Page AI-Ready

Design content like you’re building a chatbot knowledge base. AI visibility starts with content structure.

- If you work with a CMS or dev team:
- › Use clear, consistent heading hierarchy
  - › Include FAQ or Q&A sections when relevant
  - › Format: Question → Answer → Details → Sources

AEO Content Strategy

## Checklist:

<p>✔ Check your HTML structure.</p> <p>Ensure key content loads in the raw page source—no JavaScript tricks. Use “View Source” or crawler tools like Googlebot.</p>	<p>✔ Include a summary up top</p> <p>Add a short paragraph or bullet list of key takeaways at the beginning of long pages. This is prime real estate for AI visibility.</p>
<p>✔ Add FAQ sections.</p> <p>Include them where relevant and mark up with FAQ schema. Prioritize likely follow-up questions your customers would ask.</p>	<p>✔ Incorporate structured data.</p> <p>Use schema for authors, organizations, FAQs, How-To guides, and products. Don’t forget key metadata like publish dates.</p>
<p>✔ Use heading tags to break up content</p> <p>Split long sections with proper &lt;h2&gt; and &lt;h3&gt; tags. Avoid large unstructured blocks of text.</p>	<p>✔ Test with an AI tool</p> <p>Paste your content into ChatGPT or another LLM. Ask it the questions your content is meant to answer. If it struggles, revise your structure.</p>

Technical Accessibility:

# Make Sure AI Can Actually Find (and Understand) Your Content

- Even the best content doesn’t help if AI can’t see it. Just like SEO, AEO has a technical side:
- › AI bots (like GPTBot and BingPreview) need free access.
  - › They expect clean, fast-loading content, no fancy scripts required.
  - › Your site structure influences what shows up in AI answer

Here’s how to make the technical side of your content AI-friendly.





# Make Your Site AI-Friendly

## 01. Check Robots.txt + Meta Tags

Make sure GPTBot, BingPreview, and Claude's bot aren't blocked. Make sure your robots.txt doesn't accidentally nofollow or noindex important pages.

## 03. Monitor AI Bot Activity

Use Profound or server logs to track:

- > Which bots visit (e.g., GPTBot, PerplexityBot)
- > What they crawl—and what they miss
- > Missing pages? Check for login walls, iframes, or blocked scripts.

## 05. Add Machine-Readable Formats

AI can't see visuals—only text and structure.

Add transcripts for videos.

Include key facts in plain text.

Use schema markup for specs, FAQs, org info, etc.

## 02. Keep Sitemaps Fresh

Maintain XML sitemaps so AI can find your newest content.

For fast-moving brands: consider content feeds or APIs for quicker discovery.

## 04. Prioritize Page Speed + Clean HTML

AI won't wait for slow pages.

- > Use fast, server-rendered pages
- > Minimize JavaScript reliance
- > Ensure fast load and clean markup

## 06. Use Smart Structure + Chunking

Don't overload a single page with 100 questions. Break it into focused, well-structured sections.

Use canonicals, clear headings, and descriptive URLs

Use Profound Agent Analytics to see which pages AI actually references and adjust from there.

# Make AI Bots Part of Your Process

Don't set it and forget it. Once your content is live, treat AI crawlers like any other high-priority visitor. If they can't see your site or can't re-crawl it after updates, you risk disappearing from AI-driven answers. Keep tabs the same way you would for SEO.

### AI Visibility

## Checklist:

- |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>✔ <b>Know Your AI Bots.</b><br/>Keep an updated list of AI crawlers (ChatGPT-User, GPTBot, PerplexityBot).</p>                                                   | <p>✔ <b>Keep Your Sitemaps Fresh.</b><br/>Especially when you add new content—make sure crawlers see it quickly.</p>                                               |
| <p>✔ <b>Review Robots.txt and Meta Tags.</b><br/>Make sure AI bots aren't blocked. Add explicit allow rules where needed.</p>                                       | <p>✔ <b>Clean Up Redirects and Canonicals.</b><br/>Avoid duplicates. Ensure canonical tags point to the preferred version of each page.</p>                        |
| <p>✔ <b>Check for Hidden Content.</b><br/>Confirm key pages aren't behind login walls, paywalls, or noindex tags. For gated content, provide indexed summaries.</p> | <p>✔ <b>Test Page Load Without JavaScript.</b><br/>Use tools like Google's Mobile-Friendly Test or a text-only browser to confirm AI can see your key content.</p> |
| <p>✔ <b>Monitor AI Bot Traffic.</b><br/>Use Profound Agent Analytics or server logs to track which bots crawl your site—and what they access.</p>                   | <p>✔ <b>Test AI Browsing (If Available).</b><br/>If GPT's browser mode is enabled, try finding your own content with it. If it doesn't surface, investigate.</p>   |
| <p>✔ <b>Consider llms.txt.</b><br/>If your dev team is ready, try an llms.txt file to surface content directly to AI crawlers.</p>                                  |                                                                                                                                                                    |



# How to Show Up as a Source, Not Just Another Result

To show up as a trusted source in AI-generated answers, your brand needs more than just on-site content. It needs external validation. Consider this the AI equivalent of backlinks and brand mentions you aimed for in traditional SEO.

**external validation** *(noun)*  
Public signals like citations, mentions, reviews, and backlinks that confirm a brand or source is trusted and relevant beyond its own website. In AEO and SEO, external validation helps search engines and AI models recognize content as credible and worth surfacing in answers.

That means getting cited on authoritative platforms like Wikipedia, review sites, and industry blogs, plus creating original content worth quoting. Building your “share-of-citation” strengthens brand visibility in both human search results and LLM training data.

Here’s how to boost your brand’s footprint across the web in a way that benefits AEO:

## Get on Citation-Friendly Platforms

AI tools tend to pull from a short list of trusted platforms (Wikipedia, Reddit, Quora, and niche industry sites). Make sure your brand shows up there.

**Wikipedia:** If you’re notable enough, get a page or contribute to related articles. Wikipedia is the #1 most cited domain in ChatGPT.

**Forums & Q&A Sites:** Join real conversations where your product is relevant. Helpful, non-promotional mentions on Reddit or Quora often show up in AI answers.

**Industry Publications:** Get featured in respected blogs or reports. AI models cite these just like human readers do. Original research is the shortcut to getting featured here.

If your brand isn’t visible beyond your own site, it won’t show up in AI-driven answers.

## Get Found Through Reviews

AI pulls from review sites just like people do. Platforms like G2, Capterra, Amazon, and niche review sites often show up in AI answers when someone asks for the “best tool for X.”

- Keep those channels active:
- › *Encourage reviews on third-party platforms, not just your own site.*
  - › *Guide happy customers to mention specific features or results in their testimonials.*
  - › *Focus on quality, not volume. A handful of detailed, relevant reviews beats dozens of generic ones.*

If real customers are saying it out loud on the internet, AI is more likely to pick it up.



G2 is the **4th most cited domain** in ChatGPT based on our research.

## Build Mentions AI Trusts

AI models take cues from high-authority sites just like search engines do. If major publications, .edu/.gov sites, or industry research mention your content, AI is more likely to surface it as a trusted source.

Focus on quality over quantity. One strong mention beats dozens of low-value ones.

Prioritize sites AI looks to: research hubs, news sites, universities, and well-known industry blogs.

Don’t focus on domains that rank well in just one LLM platform. Only 11% of domains are shared between Google Search and ChatGPT.



Become the Source AI Quotes

AI models surface answers, but they lean on brands they trust to supply them. That’s your share-of-citation: how often your brand gets cited versus competitors.

To grow it:

- > Publish clear, quotable facts and stats.
- > Make your content easy to reference: bold key takeaways, add clear source lines, and use consistent branding.
- > Contribute insights to industry reports or guest posts where your brand name and data will get credited.

If your insights get shared across blogs, reports, and roundup articles, AI models are more likely to pick them up.

Help AI Recognize (and Recommend) Your Brand

AI models connect brands to topics. The more often your brand shows up in credible places, the more likely LLMs are to recognize it as relevant.

That means investing in digital PR beyond your own site:

- > Get your team quoted in articles.
- > Join podcasts and webinars that get published online.
- > Publish thought leadership under your brand or founder’s name.

When an AI sees your brand mentioned alongside one niche topic across the web, it strengthens your presence for both SEO and AEO.

**Tip:** Because LLMs can’t render Javascript, try embedding the full transcript of any video onto your existing page in addition to embedding the video.

Keep Tabs on Where (and How) You’re Mentioned

You can’t control everything AI picks up but you can monitor it. Make it a habit to check where your brand is being cited across the web. You can use Google Alerts, Mention, or just good old manual searches.

When someone shares your research or mentions your product in a blog or forum, amplify it. If you spot outdated or inaccurate info on Wikipedia, review sites, or industry articles, reach out and get it fixed. AI models learn from what’s out there, so keeping those mentions accurate helps protect your brand’s story.

How to Build Your Brand’s Citation Footprint

If you want AI systems to recognize and reference your brand, you can’t leave it to chance. Treat it like a campaign: every piece of original content you create (especially flagship assets) deserves a plan to get talked about, linked to, and cited across the web.

Think press outreach, social sharing, community engagement, and strategic partnerships. The more third-party mentions you earn, the more your content feeds into AI answers.

**Tip:** Anytime you launch a flagship report, checklist, or original data post, treat it like a mini product launch. Promote it far and wide not just for human clicks, but to feed AI systems the signals they’ll use to reference you next time.



External Validation:

Checklist:

- ✔ Set up brand mention alerts.  
Use Google Alerts, Mention, or F5bot (for Reddit and Hacker News) to stay on top of new citations and discussions.
- ✔ Audit your Wikipedia presence.  
Make sure your page is accurate and up to date. If you don't have one, work toward creating one—factually, not promotional. Contribute value to relevant pages where appropriate.
- ✔ Engage in key industry forums and Q&A sites.  
Identify where your audience hangs out (Reddit, Quora, niche forums) and show up there regularly. Contribute helpfully—not just to promote, but to get your brand's name into relevant conversations.
- ✔ Encourage customer reviews on third-party platforms.  
Think G2, Capterra, Amazon, or wherever reviews matter in your space. Provide direct links and make it part of your customer follow-up process.



- ✔ Plan quarterly PR pushes around new content.  
Don't just hit publish and hope. Pitch your findings to journalists and bloggers, share infographics, submit to communities like Hacker News if it fits.
- ✔ Partner with influencers and communities.  
Guest interviews, AMAs, webinars—any format that lives on as written content counts. Make sure those pieces are easy for AI bots to crawl.
- ✔ Monitor competitor citations.  
If a competitor keeps showing up in AI answers, study why. What's getting them cited? Learn from it and plan your own angle.
- ✔ Clean Up Redirects and Canonicals.  
Avoid duplicate URLs confusing crawlers. Canonicals should point to the preferred version.

Don't Set It and Forget It:

# How to Keep Your AEO Strategy Working

Like any smart marketing strategy, AEO needs regular check-ins. AI tools evolve fast. New models drop, user behavior shifts, platforms change how they pull answers frequently. If you want to get and remain visible, staying active is non-negotiable.

Here's your game plan for keeping AEO efforts sharp, steady, and moving forward:

What to Watch + Why it Matters	Troubleshooting + Quick Fixes
<p><b>Keep Tabs on Your Visibility Score</b></p> <p>That baseline visibility you set up? Don't let it gather dust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Re-run your key prompts monthly or quarterly.</li><li>Look for steady growth—or red flags like sudden drops.</li><li>Progress here shows your AEO efforts are working.</li></ul>	<p><b>Not Showing Up Anymore?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Check robots.txt or recent content changes.</li><li>Rerun your baseline prompt set.</li><li>Check if newer competitor content is beating yours.</li></ul>
<p><b>Check Where You Show Up and How You're Framed</b></p> <p>Mentions aren't enough. Are you the star of the answer or just background noise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Watch for language like "best," "top-rated," or "affordable."</li><li>Track where you rank in AI lists (top 3 is ideal).</li></ul>	<p><b>Always Buried in Position #5?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tighten up your answer structure.</li><li>Lead with clearer, more direct answers.</li><li>Use <i>Profound Actions</i> to create new content or optimize existing content.</li></ul>



What to Watch + Why it Matters	Troubleshooting + Quick Fixes
<p><b>Watch for Clicks and Conversions from AI Sources</b></p> <p>Bing, Perplexity, and others send real traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Set up custom segments in Google Analytics or whatever tool you use.</li><li>Note bumps after new content drops or PR pushes.</li></ul>	<p><b>AI's Getting Your Brand Tone Wrong?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review how your content is worded.</li><li>Publish clearer positioning content or refresh top pages.</li></ul>
<p><b>Stay on Top of AI Platform Updates</b></p> <p>AI platforms evolve faster than old-school SEO ever did.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Subscribe to product updates from OpenAI, Google, Microsoft, Anthropic.</li><li>Be ready to pivot your AEO playbook when something shifts.</li></ul>	<p><b>Zero Traffic from AI Platforms?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Make sure pages are structured for AI readability (see Section 6).</li><li>Double-check your analytics setup for AI referrers.</li></ul>
<p><b>Keep Iterating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Treat AEO like an ongoing feedback loop, not a one-and-done campaign.</li><li>Refresh or repurpose content that isn't hitting.</li><li>Double down on what's working: more formats, more distribution.</li></ul>	<p><b>Competitor Keeps Popping Up?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Audit what they're publishing.</li><li>Build stronger flagship content or unique data assets.</li></ul>
<p><b>Set Alerts So You Don't Miss a Beat</b></p> <p>Tools like <i>Profound</i> can do the monitoring for you.</p> <p>Alerts for lost rankings, competitor surges, or weird sentiment shifts save you from constant manual checks.</p>	<p><b>New Platform Feature?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Set a recurring "AI Update Hour" on your calendar each quarter.</li><li>Test fresh prompts after big updates.</li></ul>



What to Watch + Why it Matters

Report AEO Alongside SEO

Make sure your monthly marketing report includes AEO numbers.

- > *Visibility Score, AI traffic, sentiment score.*
- > *It helps leadership treat AEO as an actual growth lever (it's not just a "nice-to-have" experiment!)*

Make AEO Someone’s Job


AEO isn’t something you set up once and forget. It needs steady attention. Whether it’s a dedicated “AI Search Task Force” or a single team member owning it who has prior SEO experience.

Their role? monitor trends, check visibility metrics, coordinate across content, SEO, and PR, and keep the team updated on what’s changing. Even a few hours a week can keep your strategy sharp and your brand visible where it counts.

Troubleshooting + Quick Fixes

Flat Metrics for Months?

- > *Expand your prompt list.*
- > *Revisit your external citation strategy.*



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Ongoing AEO Monitoring

Checklist:

✔ Set a regular check-in.

Run your prompt tests and update Visibility Score metrics monthly or quarterly. Keep tabs on your baseline visibility.

✔ Keep live monitoring active.

Make sure tools like Profound are tracking your priority keywords and competitor mentions in real time.

✔ Build a AEO reporting template.

Include metrics like Visibility Score, ranking position, sentiment insights, AI referral traffic, and HDYHAU mentions. Make it easy to update and share.

✔ Set up alerts for big shifts.

Watch for sudden changes like losing a top AI placement, a spike in competitor mentions, or a drop to zero on key queries.

✔ Hold quarterly AEO reviews.

Meet with your team to go over the numbers, spot patterns, adjust your strategy, and document action items.

✔ Stay on top of LLM updates.

Share new developments internally. Keep the team informed via Slack, email, or a quick meeting.

✔ Be ready to pivot.

If platforms change how they pull or show answers, adjust your approach and make sure stakeholders know what’s happening.



# AEO Isn't a Trend. It's the Next Phase of Search

AEO isn't just a nice-to-have. If people are asking AI tools about your space, your brand needs to show up—clearly, consistently, and credibly.

That's what Answer Engine Optimization is about: getting seen and cited when the answer matters.

**You've got the playbook now:**

- >>> Figure out if AEO is worth prioritizing for your audience.
- >>> Map how much people are already talking about your brand (or your competitors) in AI tools.
- >>> Structure your content, clean up your tech, and get your name showing up in the right places across the web.
- >>> Keep measuring. Keep adjusting.
- >>> AEO isn't something you set once and leave running. It's an ongoing part of your marketing strategy just like SEO became years ago.

The brands who lean in now will be the ones everyone else is chasing in a year or two.



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