

• FIELD GUIDE · 33 CHECKS

The GEO *Checklist.*

2026 edition

33 checks to get your brand named and recommended when buyers ask ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, Claude or Copilot who to hire.



0.664

correlation between branded web mentions and AI Overview visibility. Backlinks scored 0.218.

AHREFS, 75,000 BRANDS

~21%

of AI citations go to ranked 'best of' listicles, the single most-cited content format.

RANQO, 100K+ AI ANSWERS, 2026

up to 40%

more visibility in AI answers from adding sources, statistics and quotations.

PRINCETON & GEORGIA TECH GEO STUDY

• PREFACE · HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Start at the top.

Work down.

AEO gets a page quoted. GEO gets your company recommended. When someone types 'best roof coating contractors in Pittsburgh' into ChatGPT, the model builds its answer from everything it can find about the companies in that space, most of it on other people's websites.

That changes where the work happens. Your own site still matters, but third-party mentions, reviews, directories and 'best of' lists carry a lot of the weight.

Use this checklist after the SEO and AEO basics are in place. Chapter 05 shows how to measure progress, because AI answers shift week to week and you need a baseline before you change anything.

<i>i.</i> Tick what's done Print it or open it in any PDF app. Every check has a box and a quick way to verify it.	<i>ii.</i> Fix the red tags first They block everything else. Quick wins come next, then the ongoing habits.	<i>iii.</i> Score yourself Count your ticks at the end and see where your site stands.
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KEY

FIX FIRST

Blocks results

QUICK WIN

Under a day

ONGOING

Monthly habit

• CHAPTER 01 · BRAND AS ENTITY

01 Make sure AI knows *who you are.*

- ☐ 01 One sentence describes what you do, for whom and where, and it appears word for word on your homepage, About page and every profile. FIX FIRST
↳ Write it down. Use it everywhere.
- ☐ 02 Name, address, phone, services and founding date match across your site, Google Business Profile, LinkedIn, Facebook, Yelp and industry directories. FIX FIRST
↳ Spreadsheet audit of every profile
- ☐ 03 Organization schema lists every official profile in sameAs. QUICK WIN
↳ validator.schema.org
- ☐ 04 Crunchbase, Wikidata (if you're eligible) and key industry directories have accurate entries. QUICK WIN
↳ Search each one for your brand
- ☐ 05 Founder and key staff have complete LinkedIn profiles that link to the company. QUICK WIN
↳ Check headline and current role
- ☐ 06 Ask each AI engine 'What is [your brand]?' and correct any wrong facts at the source they cite. ONGOING
↳ Fix the source, not the AI

6 checks in this chapter

Done: _____ / 6

NOTES · WHAT TO FIX ON MY SITE

• CHAPTER 02 · THIRD-PARTY MENTIONS

02 Get talked about *off your site.*

- ☐ 07 List the 'best [service] in [city/industry]' articles that AI engines cite for your category, and get included in them. FIX FIRST
↳ Ask ChatGPT and Perplexity the buyer question, then open every source
- ☐ 08 Reviews keep coming in on Google plus the one or two platforms your industry uses (Clutch, G2, Houzz, Angi, Trustpilot). FIX FIRST
↳ Set a monthly target
- ☐ 09 Review replies mention the specific service and location in natural language. QUICK WIN
↳ 'Thanks for trusting us with your Houston roof repair'
- ☐ 10 You're listed in the top directories and associations for your trade. QUICK WIN
↳ Search '[industry] directory' and '[industry] association'
- ☐ 11 Genuine, helpful participation on Reddit, Quora and industry forums where buyers ask questions. No spam, no fake accounts. ONGOING
↳ Answer as a named expert
- ☐ 12 Earn press and podcast mentions with something worth reporting: data, a strong opinion, a case study. ONGOING
↳ Pitch one outlet a month
- ☐ 13 Partners, suppliers and clients mention you on their sites (case studies, partner pages, testimonials). ONGOING
↳ Ask after every finished project

7 checks in this chapter

Done: ____ / 7

NOTES · WHAT TO FIX ON MY SITE

• CHAPTER 03 · CITABLE CONTENT

03 Publish what *models want to repeat.*

- ☐ 14 Publish original numbers only you have: average project cost, job counts, response times, survey results. FIX FIRST
↳ One stat-led page per quarter
- ☐ 15 Pages include named expert quotes with the person's title. QUICK WIN
↳ Quote your own team as experts
- ☐ 16 Every statistic links to its original source. QUICK WIN
↳ No orphan numbers
- ☐ 17 Write your own honest 'best [service] options' or 'alternatives to [competitor]' page, fair to others. QUICK WIN
↳ Engines cite balanced comparisons
- ☐ 18 Case studies state the client, problem, approach and measurable result. QUICK WIN
↳ Numbers in the first paragraph
- ☐ 19 Key pages are refreshed at least quarterly. Stale facts get dropped or misquoted. ONGOING
↳ Calendar it

6 checks in this chapter

Done: _____ / 6

NOTES · WHAT TO FIX ON MY SITE

• CHAPTER 04 · CATEGORY OWNERSHIP

04 Own a *specific corner.*

- ☐ 20 Pick the narrow category you want to be named for (e.g. 'commercial roof coating in Western PA', not 'roofing'). FIX FIRST
↳ Specific beats broad
- ☐ 21 A hub page covers that category in depth, linking to every supporting page. QUICK WIN
↳ One URL that defines your niche
- ☐ 22 Your brand name appears next to the category phrase across your site and profiles. QUICK WIN
↳ Consistent pairing builds association
- ☐ 23 Content answers the follow-up questions engines ask in multi-step research (cost, timeline, risks, alternatives, how to choose). ONGOING
↳ Map the buyer's full question chain
- ☐ 24 Show up for the comparisons buyers make: you vs. the two or three names AI already recommends. ONGOING
↳ Honest comparison pages

5 checks in this chapter

Done: ____ / 5

NOTES · WHAT TO FIX ON MY SITE

• CHAPTER 05 · PROMPT TRACKING

05 Measure before *you change things.*

- ☐ 25 Build a list of 20 to 30 prompts real buyers would type, including local and comparison prompts. FIX FIRST
↳ Use real wording from sales calls
- ☐ 26 Record a baseline: for each prompt and engine, is your brand named, cited, or absent? FIX FIRST
↳ ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, Google AI Mode
- ☐ 27 Note which competitors and which source URLs appear in each answer. QUICK WIN
↳ These URLs become your outreach list
- ☐ 28 Re-run the prompts monthly, logged out or in a clean session, and track share of answers over time. ONGOING
↳ Answers vary run to run, so test each prompt more than once
- ☐ 29 Track AI referral traffic and leads in GA4 next to the prompt results. ONGOING
↳ Mentions should turn into calls
- ☐ 30 Flag misattribution: wrong prices, retired services, competitor confusion. Fix at the cited source. ONGOING
↳ Keep a corrections log

6 checks in this chapter

Done: _____ / 6

NOTES · WHAT TO FIX ON MY SITE

06 Keep the doors open.

- ☐ 31 Search crawlers are allowed: Googlebot, Bingbot, OAI-SearchBot, PerplexityBot, Claude-SearchBot. FIX FIRST
[↪ See the AEO checklist, chapter 01](#)
 - ☐ 32 Key facts load in plain HTML, not behind scripts, tabs or logins. QUICK WIN
[↪ View source](#)
 - ☐ 33 The SEO checklist foundations are in place. Most AI engines start from a search index. ONGOING
[↪ Run the SEO checklist first](#)

3 checks in this chapter

Done: _____ / 3

NOTES • WHAT TO FIX ON MY SITE

• APPENDIX · WHAT TO IGNORE

Three things *to stop doing.*

Skip it

Ranking #1 on Google guarantees AI mentions

One 2026 study of 153,425 AI citations found about 77% of cited URLs weren't in the organic top 10 for that query.

Skip it

Backlinks are what counts

Brand mentions correlated with AI visibility about three times more strongly than backlinks in Ahrefs' data.

Skip it

One engine tells you everything

Only 11% of domains cited by ChatGPT were also cited by Perplexity. Test every engine your buyers use.

• SCORECARD · TOTAL TICKS OUT OF 33

0 – 13**Foundations missing**

Start with every red tag. Most of your effort elsewhere is leaking away until these are fixed.

14 – 23**Building**

The basics work. Clear the quick wins and you'll see movement within a few weeks.

24 – 30**Competitive**

You're ahead of most sites in your space. Consistency on the ongoing checks decides the rest.

31 – 33**Leading**

Keep measuring. At this level the gains come from original data and earned mentions.

• SOURCES

1. Ahrefs, brand mentions vs. AI Overview visibility across 75,000 brands ahrefs.com/blog
2. Kumar, "Generative Engine Optimization at Scale", arXiv:2606.20065 (June 2026) arxiv.org/abs/2606.20065
3. Aggarwal et al., "GEO: Generative Engine Optimization", Princeton University & Georgia Tech arxiv.org/abs/2311.09735
4. OrganikPI, analysis of 153,425 AI citations (2026) organikpi.com
5. Omnibound, cross-engine citation overlap research (2026) omnibound.ai
6. Google Search Central, AI features optimization guide (May 15, 2026) developers.google.com/search

• COLOPHON · DONE-FOR-YOU

Rather I run this *for you?*

I'm Marc. I design, build and optimize sites for B2B and service businesses in the US, Europe and Africa, and I work through this list on every one. Book 30 minutes and I'll audit your site live on the call and show you which checks are costing you leads.

BOOK A CALL

Free 30-minute live audit

marcfriedmanportfolio.com/contact

FREE TOOL

See how AI engines see your brand

marcfriedmanportfolio.com/free-geo-audit

5.0★

25 reviews on Google,
Clutch and LinkedIn

50+

Projects shipped
across three continents

98

Lighthouse score on
recent builds

< 2s

Load time standard on
every site

“Marc was able to execute the vision perfectly. He dedicates his time to the client, ensuring the client is completely satisfied at each step of the process.”

OMAR TURNER · CEO, BINNS MEDIA GROUP

Also in this series:

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