

Winning in AI Search: How Brands Earn a Place in the Answer

*Improving brand visibility in AI-generated search with a
practical GEO framework.*

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Executive Summary

Generative Engine Optimization, or GEO, is the practice of improving how often a brand appears in AI-generated answers, summaries, and recommendations. As more users rely on large language models and AI-assisted search tools to discover products, companies, and information, GEO is becoming a core visibility discipline alongside traditional SEO.

Strong GEO performance depends on more than keywords. Brands need content that AI systems can access, understand, trust, and cite. That means using clear language, structured data, trusted third-party mentions, current information, and consistent brand signals across the web.

This paper summarizes the core practices that support GEO and outlines a practical GEO Optimizer Agent. The agent evaluates how a brand appears in grounded AI search experiences and recommends the actions most likely to improve visibility.



Practical GEO principle: optimize for inclusion in the answer itself, not only for traffic from the results page.



Why GEO Matters

AI tools do not always return a long list of links. They often generate a direct answer supported by a smaller set of cited sources. In that environment, brands compete for inclusion in the answer itself, not only for clicks.

To earn that inclusion, brands must make their information easy to interpret and easy to verify. GEO aligns content, technical signals, and authority signals so that AI systems can recommend a brand with confidence.

GEO Best Practices



Use clear headings and short paragraphs

Write with plain headings, concise paragraphs, and simple language. Clear structure helps AI systems identify the topic of each section and quote content more accurately.

It also reduces ambiguity. When each section addresses one idea clearly, models are less likely to mix concepts or paraphrase the page incorrectly.



Add behind-the-scenes labels

Implement basic structured data, also called schema markup, to label what each page contains. Mark pages as FAQs, how-to guides, product pages, organization pages, reviews, or local business listings where appropriate.

This machine-readable layer tells AI systems what kind of information is being provided and which facts matter most, including hours, locations, product attributes, and service details.



Let reputable AI bots in

Review the site's robots.txt file and explicitly allow trusted AI crawlers such as OpenAI's GPTBot and Google's AI systems when that aligns with company policy.

Brands can still block abusive or low-value scrapers. The goal is selective openness, not unrestricted access.



Earn mentions on trustworthy sites

AI systems place more weight on information that appears across credible sources. Mentions in industry publications, high-quality guest posts, podcast transcripts, analyst coverage, and reputable news outlets help strengthen authority.

This is not only a link-building tactic. It is also an entity-building tactic that reinforces expertise, relevance, and legitimacy.

GEO Best Practices (cont'd)



Keep pages fresh

AI tools often prefer recent information, especially commercial, competitive, or time-sensitive questions. Refresh core pages regularly with current dates, examples, proof points, statistics, and product details.

Fresh content signals that the brand is active and reliable. Old content can reduce trust and lower the chance of being cited.



Track mention share, not just clicks

Traditional SEO focuses on rankings and traffic. GEO also requires brands to measure how often they are cited, mentioned, or recommended inside AI-generated responses.

New tools are emerging for this purpose. Some surface citations in consumer AI tools, while others track brand mentions across multiple generative platforms.

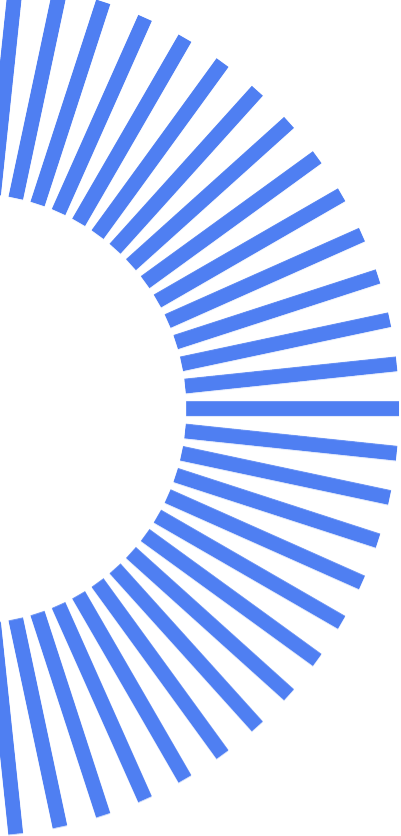


Maintain cross-site consistency

Keep brand names, product descriptions, taglines, positioning, and categorical language consistent across the company's website, social profiles, directories, press coverage, and third-party platforms.

Large language models often resolve entities across many sources. Inconsistent naming or messaging can fragment the brand entity and weaken authority.

Taken together, these practices make a brand easier for AI systems to access, understand, and verify. That combination increases the likelihood that the brand will be cited or recommended when users ask relevant questions.



GEO Optimizer Agent Implementation

A GEO Optimizer Agent can help a brand evaluate how it currently appears in grounded AI search experiences and identify the highest-impact actions for improvement. The goal is not simply to audit a website. The goal is to test whether the brand is visible, credible, and consistently recommended in the questions real users ask.

Inputs and Outputs

| Input | Brand name |
|--------------------------|---|
| Output | Recommendations to improve GEO performance and increase the chance of appearing prominently in grounded AI responses, with citations. |
| Primary objective | Understand whether the brand is visible in relevant AI answers and what changes would improve that visibility. |
| Evidence base | Grounded web-search results, citation patterns, and observed competitor overlap. |

Implementation Workflow

1. **Load the GEO best practices.** Use the best practices in this paper as the evaluation framework and recommendation library.
2. **Generate brand-related questions.** Create realistic user questions where the brand should appear, including category questions, comparison questions, trust questions, use-case questions, and local or business-profile questions.
3. **Run the questions through a grounded LLM.** Use an LLM with web search or another retrieval layer so the test reflects real answer-generation conditions rather than theory.





GEO Optimizer Agent Implementation

Implementation Workflow (cont'd)

- 4. Summarize the search results.** Record whether the brand appears, how prominently it appears, which sources are cited, and which competitors are preferred instead.
- 5. Assess whether the brand is under-optimized.** Determine whether the brand is missing from important questions, cited less often than competitors, or supported by weak authority signals.
- 6. Branch the recommendation logic.** If the brand is under-optimized, select the most relevant best practices and turn them into a prioritized action plan. If the brand is already performing well, identify what is driving success and recommend protecting those behaviors.

Decision Logic

The agent should not force a negative conclusion. It should assess the brand objectively and use evidence from grounded results to decide whether the brand is under-optimized, competitive, or already performing strongly.

If the brand is absent from high-intent questions, weakly cited, or supported by limited third-party authority, the agent should map those gaps to the best practices most likely to fix them. If the brand already appears consistently, the agent should document the successful signals that deserve continued investment.

Recommended Deliverables

A strong GEO Optimizer Agent should produce more than a pass-or-fail answer. It should return the tested questions, a summary of grounded results, citation patterns, competitor overlap, visibility gaps, and a prioritized action plan.

It should also distinguish between actions that improve discoverability, actions that improve trust, and actions that improve consistency. That makes the output easier for content, SEO, brand, and marketing teams to use.

Conclusion

GEO is becoming a core discipline for brand visibility in AI-driven discovery. As AI systems take a larger role in search, comparison, and recommendation, brands need to optimize for inclusion in answers, not only for rankings in search results.

The brands that win in AI search will be the ones that are easiest to understand, easiest to trust, and easiest to verify across the web. Clear content, structured data, trusted mentions, current information, measurable mention share, and consistent brand identity form the foundation of that success.

A GEO Optimizer Agent turns these principles into a repeatable process. By combining best-practice guidance with grounded web search, a brand can identify where it is falling short, understand why competitors are being cited, and take practical steps to strengthen its visibility in AI-generated experiences.

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