

The Research Institute AI Cites 50% More Often

How a home improvement industry research organization grew its citation share 50% and its top-3 Google rankings 40% — becoming the source both engines point to.

+51%

OWN-CONTENT CITATION SHARE
— 7.2% → 10.8%

+40%

TOP-3 GOOGLE KEYWORDS — 25
→ 35 (AHREFS)

18.3%

AI VISIBILITY — UP FROM 14.8%

THE CLIENT

A member-funded research institute serving the home improvement industry. Its value depends on being the authority both people and machines cite — when AI answers industry questions from someone else's data, the institute's relevance erodes.

THE CHALLENGE

- AI engines answered industry questions citing news aggregators and vendors instead of the primary research source
- Only 7.2% of AI answer citations pointed to the institute's own work at the first audit
- Research locked in formats (reports, PDFs) that AI engines struggle to parse and credit

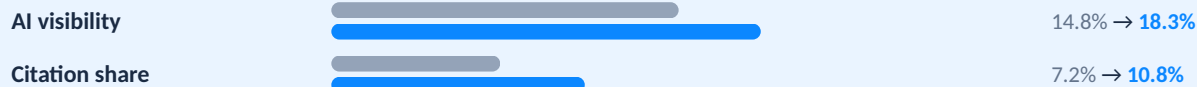
WHAT VISTO DID

Five months of citation-focused optimization across 19 audit cycles: research findings restructured into citable, parseable formats, insight pages built around the questions practitioners ask, and authority signals strengthened for both engines.

RESULTS

- **Citations:** own-content citation share 7.2% → 10.8% — +51%, reclaiming credit for its own research
- **Google rankings:** top-3 keywords up 40%, 25 → 35 (Ahrefs)
- **AI visibility:** 14.8% → 18.3% of tracked industry prompts
- **The authority loop:** more citations feed more visibility, which feeds more member value

AI SEARCH: BEFORE → AFTER (FIRST AUDIT VS. LATEST)



Gray = first audit · Blue = latest audit · Source: Visto GEO audits

THE SEO PICTURE

Keywords ranking in Google's top 3 — 25 → 35 (+40%)

Monthly, Mar – Jul 2026 · Source: Ahrefs



WHY AI SEARCH MATTERS HERE

For a research organization, citations are the product: being the source AI quotes is the machine-age version of being cited in the trade press. Growing citation share 50% while top-3 rankings climbed 40% shows the same structured-authority work compounding on both surfaces.

HOW IT WORKS

1

Audit

Visto queries AI engines with the real prompts buyers use and measures visibility, share of voice, and citations — alongside classic search rankings.

2

Optimize

Visto's AI agents generate and apply the fixes: content structured for AI citation, coverage of buyer questions, and on-page SEO — one system for both.

3

Compound

Every cycle re-measures and builds on the last. Managed by the client's marketing agency on the Visto platform.

GEO measured by Visto audits: 19 audits over 149 days (Mar 5 – Aug 1, 2026). SEO figures from Ahrefs, Mar vs. Jul 2026 (latest full month). Client anonymized.