SHRINKSTUDIO

November 2026

AI visibility checklist

22 checks to get your site named in AI answers.



Before you start

Checks 22
Time about 5 hours

Plenty of B2B tech teams rank well on Google and still go missing from the answers ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity give their buyers. The site is usually working just fine. Being quoted by AI works to different rules from being ranked.

An AI tool needs a page it's allowed to read, an answer it can lift cleanly, and other sites that describe you the same way you do. Sites built for people browsing often fall short on one of those, and this checklist is the 22 checks that find out where. Each check has the reason, a way to test it yourself and the fix. Most need nobody but your marketing team, and the ones that need a developer say so.

How to use it

01 Start with the first 30 minutes on the next page: five checks you can do today with a browser.

02 Work through the five sections in order. Tick each check for your key pages, or for the site as a whole.

03 Give every check an owner and a date on the printable checklist at the back.

04 Use the tracking sheet to record where you stand today, then read your results at weeks 4 and 8, as the "Is it working?" page sets out.

Times are for checking. Fixes take longer and depend on the site.

The five sections

No.	Section	Checks	About	Page
01	What AI reads first	5	1 hour	04
02	Pages AI will quote	7	1.5 hours	10
03	Keeping content fresh	3	30 minutes	16
04	Getting other sites to vouch for you	3	1 hour	19
05	Tracking it properly	4	1 hour	23

The first 30 minutes

Checks 5
Time 30 minutes

Five checks you can do today with a browser and a blank document. They cover crawler access, page HTML, your opening lines, price and a first reading of where you stand. Each one points to the full check later in the guide.

1 Open your robots.txt

5 min
Check 1

Go to yoursite.com/robots.txt. If you see Disallow: / under OAI-SearchBot, ChatGPT-User, Claude-SearchBot, Claude-User, PerplexityBot or User-agent: *, AI search tools are being turned away.

2 View the source of your homepage

5 min
Check 2

Right-click the page, choose View page source and search for your headline and a price. If they're missing there, they're probably missing for AI crawlers too.

3 Run the two-line test

5 min
Check 6

Copy the first two lines under your homepage headline into a blank document. Read them cold. Do they say who you help, with what, and where?

4 Ask what you cost

5 min
Check 10

Ask ChatGPT "How much does [your product] cost?" and look at the sources it lists. If the answer comes from a review site or a competitor, the tool is pricing you from someone else's page. Do it logged out, in a private window, so your own chats and settings don't shape the answer.

5 Ask three buyer questions

10 min
Check 19

In ChatGPT and Perplexity, ask three questions a buyer would ask before they know your name, such as "best [category] for [type of company]". Note who gets named and which pages are cited, and keep it as your week 0 reading. Use a logged-out private window here too.

01

Section 1

What AI reads first

Make sure AI tools can reach and read every page that matters.

AI tools read your pages the way a crawler does: they fetch the raw HTML and work from what's there. Anything they're blocked from, or can't parse quickly, doesn't count towards the answer. It's also the cheapest section on this list to fix.

Checks 5 Time about 1 hour Who Marketing, with a developer for two checks

Checks in this section

1.1	Let AI search tools in	10 min
1.2	Put key content in the page HTML	10 min
1.3	Use one H1 and headings in order	10 min
1.4	Make titles and URLs say what the page is	15 min
1.5	Describe each page with structured data	15 min

1.1 Let AI search tools in

Who Marketing, plus a developer if you use Cloudflare Time about 10 min

Why	A tool that can't fetch your page can't quote it. Since 1 July 2025, Cloudflare has blocked AI crawlers by default on new domains, so a site can be shut out without anyone touching robots.txt (Cloudflare; The Register).
How to check	Open yoursite.com/robots.txt. Look for Disallow lines under OAI-SearchBot, ChatGPT-User, Claude-SearchBot, Claude-User or PerplexityBot, and under User-agent: *. If your site runs through Cloudflare, ask whoever manages it to check its AI crawler and bot settings too.
Fix	Allow the search and user agents. They fetch pages for answers and when someone asks about a page. Training crawlers are a separate decision: GPTBot and ClaudeBot collect data for training, and OpenAI treats GPTBot and OAI-SearchBot independently, so you can block training and stay in ChatGPT search.
Watch out	Google-Extended controls Gemini training and grounding only. Blocking it leaves you in Google Search, AI Overviews and AI Mode.

Which crawler does what

Allow the first two columns to appear in AI answers. Training is a separate choice.

	Search answers Allow	Fetches when a user asks Allow	Training Your choice
OpenAI	OAI-SearchBot	ChatGPT-User	GPTBot
Anthropic	Claude-SearchBot	Claude-User	ClaudeBot
Perplexity	PerplexityBot	Perplexity-User	Not listed by Perplexity
Google	Googlebot, as for normal Search. It covers AI Overviews and AI Mode.		Google-Extended (Gemini only)

From each company's crawler documentation, checked 6 November 2026. Blocking a training crawler leaves you in that company's search answers.

1.2 Put key content in the page HTML

Who Marketing to check, a developer to fix Time about 10 min

Why

ChatGPT's and Claude's crawlers fetch JavaScript files without running them, so text that only appears after a script runs can be invisible to them (Vercel, December 2024).

How to check

Open a key page, right-click and choose View page source (Inspect shows the page after scripts run, so use View page source). Search for your headline, a price and one FAQ answer.

Fix

Keep answers, prices and FAQs in the page itself. Tabs and accordions are fine when the text is in the HTML and only hidden with CSS. The problem is content fetched after the page loads, or drawn by a third-party widget.

1.3 Use one H1 and headings in order

Who Marketing Time about 10 min

Why	Headings tell a model what each part of the page answers. Microsoft's Bing team says they "act like chapter titles that define clear content slices" (Microsoft, October 2025). In SISTRIX's study of 48,527 matched page pairs, an H1 of five words or more made a page 1.4 times as likely to be cited (SISTRIX, October 2026), and 87% of pages ChatGPT cites use a single H1 (AirOps, 2026).
How to check	Use a free headings extension for your browser (search your extension store for "headings outline") on your homepage and top three service pages. Count the H1s and look for skipped levels.
Fix	One H1 that names what the page is about, then H2 and H3 in sequence. If a heading level was chosen for its size, change the style and keep the level.

1.4 Make titles and URLs say what the page is

Who Marketing Time about 15 min

Why	A plain title and URL tell a model what the page answers. In Ahrefs' study of 1.4 million ChatGPT prompts, pages ChatGPT retrieved were cited about 90% of the time when their URLs were in plain words, against 81% for other URLs (Ahrefs, April 2026).
How to check	List the title (the text in the browser tab) and URL of your ten most important pages. Mark any that don't name the page's subject.
Fix	Name pages for the question or service they cover, such as /pricing or /payroll-software-for-accountants. Whenever a URL changes, add a 301 redirect from the old one.

1.5 Describe each page with structured data

Who Marketing to check, a developer to add Time about 15 min

Why	Structured data tells machines who you are and what each page is. Microsoft says it turns "plain text into structured data that machines can interpret with confidence" (Microsoft, October 2025). Treat it as groundwork: when Ahrefs tracked 1,885 pages that added it, their citations stayed flat (Ahrefs, May 2026), and Google says there's "no special schema.org structured data that you need to add" for its AI features (Google).
How to check	Paste a URL into the Schema Markup Validator (validator.schema.org) or Google's Rich Results Test and list the types it finds.
Fix	Organization on the homepage, WebPage or Article on every page, BreadcrumbList, FAQPage where there's an FAQ, and Product or Service with an Offer where you publish prices. Every value must match what's visible on the page.

Lower priority

llms.txt

llms.txt is a 2024 proposal (llmstxt.org) for a short plain-text summary of your site. It isn't a standard, and not every AI tool reads it. Add one if it's quick, once everything above is done.

Also worth doing

Set up Bing Webmaster Tools

Microsoft 365 Copilot sends its web searches to Bing (Microsoft Learn), and Microsoft says Web IQ, built on Bing's index, powers ChatGPT as well as Copilot (Microsoft Web IQ). Bing Webmaster Tools has an AI Performance report showing how often your pages are cited in Copilot and Bing's AI summaries (Bing, February 2026). While you're there, IndexNow lets you tell Bing and other engines when a page changes (IndexNow).

What makes a page more likely to be cited

How much more likely a page was to be cited with each feature, against a matched page from the same site without it.



SISTRIX, citation-worthiness study, 48,527 matched page pairs, October 2026. This shows a correlation; the study doesn't test cause.

Further reading

OpenAI: Overview of OpenAI crawlers →

Which agent does what.

Anthropic: Does Anthropic crawl data from the web? →

ClaudeBot, Claude-SearchBot and Claude-User.

Google: AI features and your website →

How AI Overviews and AI Mode use your pages.

Shrink: The 5 files AI reads before your website →

robots.txt, sitemap, structured data, llms.txt and headings.

02

Section 2

Pages AI will quote

Write so a model can lift your answer and get it right.

A model quotes the clearest answer it can find. That means every key page should answer its question near the top, in sentences that still make sense once they're pulled out of the page, with the facts a buyer needs stated plainly.

Checks 7 Time about 1.5 hours Who Marketing

Checks in this section

2.1	Answer the question in the first two lines	5 min
2.2	Write key sentences that make sense on their own	10 min
2.3	Use lists and tables for anything that's a set	10 min
2.4	Back claims with numbers and sources	15 min
2.5	Publish your prices, or a starting price, as text	10 min
2.6	Write FAQs from questions buyers ask	20 min
2.7	Say something only you can say	15 min

2.1 Answer the question in the first two lines

Who Marketing Time about 5 min

Why	A model is looking for an answer to lift, and it looks near the top. In Kevin Indig's study of 1.2 million AI answers, 44.2% of citations came from the first 30% of the page (Search Engine Journal, February 2026).
How to check	Copy the first two lines under the headline of your homepage and your main service page into a blank document. Read them as someone who's never heard of you. Do they say who you help, with what, and where?
Fix	Open with who you are, what you do, who it's for and where, then the positioning.

Example

A typical opening	"We help ambitious teams unlock growth with smarter workflows."
One that answers	"nxzen is a global technology, consulting, and engineering partner. We help energy, utilities, and national infrastructure providers optimise performance, digitise operations, and enhance resilience" (nxzen.com, November 2026).

In two sentences it names the company, what it is, who it's for and what it does for them, so a model can lift either one and get it right.

2.2 Write key sentences that make sense on their own

Who Marketing Time about 10 min

Why	A sentence lifted into an answer loses the one before it. Microsoft's guidance asks for "sentences that make sense even when pulled out of context" (Microsoft, October 2025).
How to check	Pick the five most important sentences on a key page and read each one alone. Mark any where "we", "it" or "this" could mean someone else.
Fix	Name things in full: the company, the product and the audience. Use the product name in key lines where you'd normally say "our platform".

2.3 Use lists and tables for anything that's a set

Who Marketing Time about 10 min

Why	Lists and tables are easy to extract and hard to misread. SISTRIX found tables with a header row made a page 1.5 times as likely to be cited (SISTRIX, October 2026), and Microsoft says lists, steps and tables "break complex details into clean, reusable segments" (Microsoft, October 2025).
How to check	Look for paragraphs that run through three or more items, steps or features, and for comparisons written out as prose. Check that tables are real HTML tables, since a table saved as an image reads as a picture.
Fix	Turn sets into lists. Put plans, features and comparisons in plain HTML tables.

2.4 Back claims with numbers and sources

Who Marketing Time about 15 min

Why	Specifics give a model something to quote. Researchers who tested ways to raise visibility in AI answers, including adding citations, quotations and statistics, found gains of up to 40% (Aggarwal et al., 2023). In SE Ranking's study of 216,524 pages, those with 19 or more data points averaged 5.4 ChatGPT citations against 2.8 (SE Ranking, November 2025).
How to check	Highlight every adjective on a key page: fast, leading, trusted, simple. Each one is a place where a number or a name would do more.
Fix	Swap adjectives for specifics: customer numbers, set-up time, prices, dates and named results (with the client's OK). Link each figure to where it comes from.
Watch out	An out-of-date figure gets repeated as fact. Note where each number lives so the quarterly review in section 3 catches it.

2.5 Publish your prices, or a starting price, as text

Who Marketing, with whoever owns pricing Time about 10 min

Why	If your price isn't on your site, a model takes it from someone else's. In a Growth Memo and Siteline test of 100 B2B products, 45% of pricing answers cited at least one third-party source when the vendor gave no real price (Growth Memo, July 2026).
How to check	Ask ChatGPT "How much does [your product] cost?" and look at the sources, logged out in a private window. Then open your pricing page source and search for the figures. Prices shown only as images, or "Contact sales" with no figure, leave the answer to someone else.
Fix	Publish at least a starting price, what it includes and how it's billed, as text on the page. If larger deals are priced case by case, give a from-price and say what moves it.

Why prices matter more than they used to

45% of pricing answers cited a third-party source when the vendor gave no real price.

Test of 100 B2B products, Growth Memo and Siteline, July 2026

Half of B2B software buyers now start their research with an AI chatbot more often than with Google, up from 29% eleven months earlier (G2, April 2026). Many sites still leave the price out. In DIXI's test of 42 B2B software startups that raised in September and October 2026, 21 said nothing about price and 14 showed a price an agent could compare (DIXI, November 2026). Forrester warns that when AI buying agents meet a "Contact us" form, they look elsewhere for the information (Forrester, August 2026).

The fix can be one line

Hard to quote

Pricing tailored to your team. Contact sales for a quote.

Easy to quote

$750/mo + $0.90 per automated ticket

Siena's pricing page: one line, in text, with the billing unit.

2.6 Write FAQs from questions buyers ask

Who Marketing Time about 20 min

Why	An FAQ gives a model a ready question and answer to quote.
How to check	Compare the FAQs on your key pages with the questions that come up in sales calls, support tickets and Search Console queries. Mark any FAQ that's there only because it was easy to answer.
Fix	Three to five FAQs per key page, each answered in its first sentence, with FAQPage structured data that matches the visible text.

2.7 Say something only you can say

Who Marketing Time about 15 min

Why	If a page says what every other page says, a model can quote any of them. Your own data and views give it a reason to quote you.
How to check	For each key page, ask whether a competitor could publish it with their name swapped in.
Fix	Add your own numbers, named client results (cleared), a clear point of view or the method you use. One specific thing per page is enough to start.

Further reading

Shrink: A plain-English guide to structured data →

What to add, and where.

Google: FAQPage structured data →

Link to confirm.

03

Section 3

Keeping content fresh

Keep the pages buyers ask about current, and show that they are.

Recently updated pages get cited more. In Seer Interactive's study of 47,097 citations across ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity, 75% of the pages cited had been updated in the last year (Seer Interactive, July 2026). The preference varies by tool: across 17 million citations, ChatGPT was the most likely to cite newer pages, while Google's AI Overviews leaned towards older ones, much like normal search (Ahrefs, July 2025). The average page cited by ChatGPT, Perplexity, Copilot and Gemini was still about 2.9 years old, so a refresh means updating what's on the page, while the URL and the page stay put.

Checks 3 Time about 30 minutes Who Marketing

Checks in this section

3.1	Review commercial pages every quarter	15 min to set up
3.2	Change the substance when you update	10 min
3.3	Show the update date and mark it up	5 min

3.1 Review commercial pages every quarter

Who Marketing Time about 15 min to set up

Why	Pages updated in the last three months averaged nearly double the ChatGPT citations of older pages, 6.0 against 3.6 (SE Ranking, November 2025).
How to check	List your service, pricing, comparison and top ten pages with the date each last had a real change. Your CMS usually shows this.
Fix	Put those pages on a three-month review with a named owner and a date in the calendar. Start with pages already losing traffic or AI mentions, then pricing and comparison pages.

3.2 Change the substance when you update

Who Marketing Time about 10 min

Why	On buying questions, the latest price, feature or result is the one a buyer needs. A new date on the same text gives a model the same page.
How to check	Look at the last three updates to a key page and note what changed apart from the date.
Fix	Update the figures, examples, screenshots, prices and FAQs. Retire anything that's no longer true.

3.3 Show the update date and mark it up

Who Marketing to check, a developer to add Time about 5 min

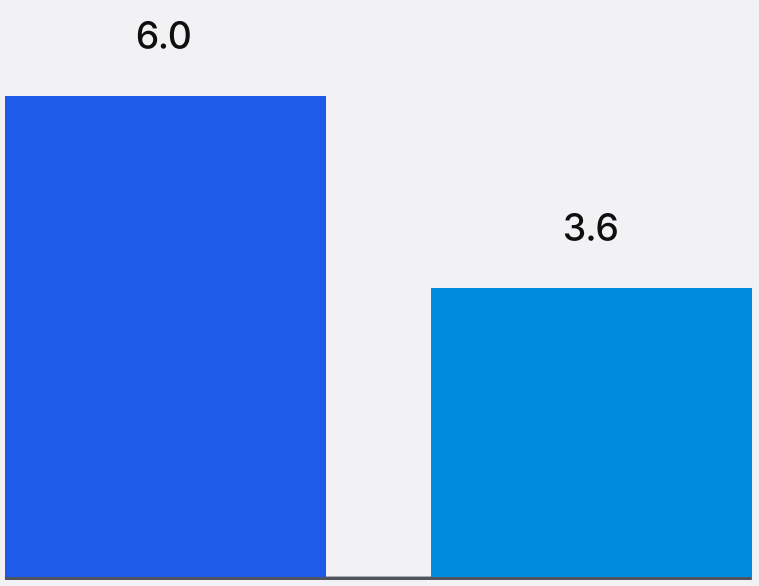
Why	A model can only treat a page as current if it can see when it changed. SISTRIX found a visible update date made a page 1.3 times as likely to be cited (SISTRIX, October 2026).
How to check	Look for a "Last updated" date on the page. Then View page source and search for dateModified.
Fix	Show "Last updated" on the page and set dateModified in the page's structured data to the same date. Only change it when the content has changed.

Fresh pages get cited more

Average ChatGPT citations per page, by when the page was last updated.

1.7×

as many citations for pages updated in the last three months.



SE Ranking, 216,524 pages, November 2025. 1.7× is 6.0 divided by 3.6.

04

Section 4

Getting other sites to vouch for you

Make what others say about you match what you say.

Most of what AI says about a brand comes from other sites. Across more than 25 million links cited by ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini, Muck Rack found 84% came from earned media, such as journalism, research and other companies' sites (Muck Rack, May 2026). In a study of 60 product categories, only 2.8% of cited sources were the brands' own pages (Search Engine Journal, August 2026). In most studies, mentions matter more than links: across 75,000 brands, branded web mentions correlated with visibility in ChatGPT, AI Mode and AI Overviews far more strongly than Domain Rating (Ahrefs, December 2025).

Checks 3 Time about 1 hour Who Marketing

Checks in this section

4.1	Rank for your buyer questions, and get onto the lists that do	30 min
4.2	Describe yourself the same way everywhere	20 min
4.3	Show up where buyers ask questions	15 min

4.1 Rank for your buyer questions, and get onto the lists that do

Who Marketing Time about 30 min

Why

"Best X for Y" and "X vs Y" pages are where models go to compare options. In Ahrefs' study of 26,283 pages ChatGPT cited, 43.8% of the page types were "best X" lists, with a strong lean towards brands ranked higher on them (Ahrefs, December 2025).

Google's AI features lean on Google Search itself. AI Overviews and AI Mode use pages that are indexed and eligible to show in Google Search, and run several related searches to find them (Google). The Gemini app also grounds some of its answers in Google Search results (Google). So a brand ChatGPT knows well can still be missing from Gemini if none of its pages rank for that search. In our own tests, when we asked Gemini which companies suit a particular industry, the ones it named tended to have a page for that industry, or appeared on the "best of" lists that rank above them. Gemini also names brands far more often than it links to them, 83.7% against 21.4% (Semrush, June 2026), so it leans on what ranking pages say about you.

How to check

Search Google in a private window for each buyer question, including "best [category] for [type of company]" and "[you] vs [main competitor]". Note the top ten results: is one of your pages there, and are you on the lists that are? Then ask ChatGPT and Gemini the same questions and compare the sources each one shows with that list.

Fix

Build one page for each industry, use case or question you want to be named for. Open with a short direct answer, then add the relevant case study, a price or range, and a few FAQs. Then contact the authors of the lists that rank and get cited, with the facts they need in one place: a one-line description, prices, customers and a contact. Publish your own comparison pages too, saying plainly that they're yours and treating competitors fairly.

What good looks like

For each of your top five buyer questions, one of your pages ranks in Google's top ten, and you appear on at least one of the lists Gemini cites.

Watch out

ChatGPT results aren't a stand-in for Gemini. They draw on different sources, so check each one separately.

4.2 Describe yourself the same way everywhere

Who Marketing Time about 20 min

Why	Models look for agreement across sources. Google says some organisation details are used "to disambiguate your organization from other organizations" (Google). Every version that differs on what you do, where you are or what you charge is a version a model might repeat.
How to check	Copy the description from each profile into one document: LinkedIn, Google Business Profile, review sites, partner directories, funding databases and marketplaces.
Fix	Write one description, category, location and price range, then update every profile to match. Being named counts whatever the link type: nofollow links correlate with AI visibility as strongly as followed ones, 0.509 against 0.504 (Semrush, October 2025).

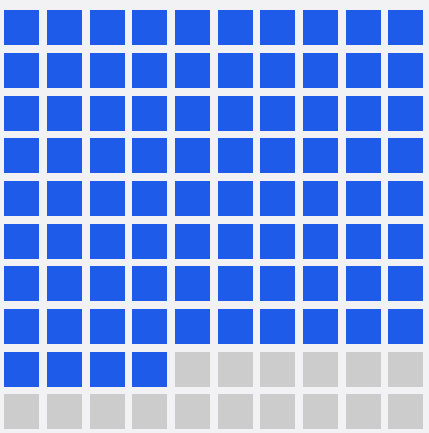
4.3 Show up where buyers ask questions

Who Marketing Time about 15 min

Why	Community sites carry a lot of weight, and the mix differs by tool. Reddit makes up 46.7% of citations among Perplexity's ten most-cited domains, while Wikipedia leads ChatGPT's at 47.9% (Profound, 2025). The mix also moves: ChatGPT cited Reddit in about 60% of answers in early August 2025 and about 10% by mid-September (Semrush, November 2025).
How to check	Search Reddit, LinkedIn and YouTube for the questions buyers ask in your category, and note which threads have someone from your team in them.
Fix	Pick one person to answer a few real questions a week, saying who they work for.

Most of what AI cites about you is someone else's page

Two separate studies, shown side by side.



84%

of AI citations came from earned media: journalism, research and other companies' sites.

Muck Rack, 25M+ links, May 2026

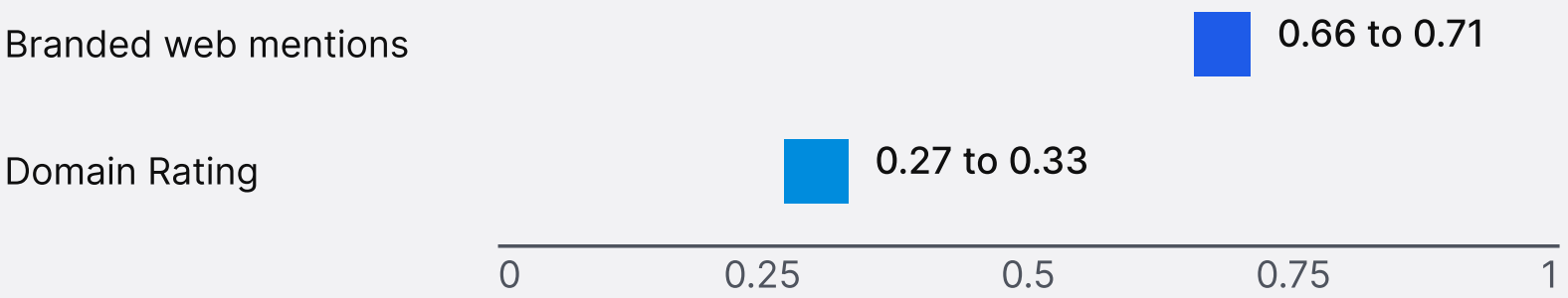
2.8%

of cited sources were the brands' own pages, across 60 product categories.

Search Engine Journal on Shero Commerce, 1,851 sources, August 2026

Mentions track AI visibility more closely than links

Correlation with brand visibility in ChatGPT, AI Mode and AI Overviews. Each bar spans the three tools.



Ahrefs, 75,000 brands, December 2025. These are correlations; neither study tests cause.

Where to start

Read what each of your profiles says about you, from directories to partner listings. They're the fastest checks in this section to fix.

05

Section 5

Tracking it properly

Measure a fixed set of questions over weeks, then tie results to changes.

AI answers change every time they're generated, so one check is mostly noise. In SparkToro's research with Gumshoe, AI tools gave the same list of brands less than once in 100 runs (SparkToro, January 2026). Judge a fixed set of questions over several weeks.

Checks 4 Time about 1 hour Who Marketing

Checks in this section

5.1 Fix a set of buyer questions 20 min

5.2 Check every tool on a schedule 15 min

5.3 Log mentions, citations and AI visits separately 10 min

5.4 Date every change and read the result four weeks later 10 min

5.1 Fix a set of buyer questions

Who Marketing Time about 20 min

Why	Your brand name tells you little. Buyers start with category and problem questions, before they know who you are.
How to check	Find your written list of the questions you check each time. If there isn't one, that's the first fix: results only compare when the questions stay the same.
Fix	Write 10 to 20 questions a buyer would ask before they know your name: category ("best payroll software for accountancy firms"), problem, comparison and price questions. Next to each, note the page on your site that should answer it. A question with no page is your next page to write. Keep the list fixed for at least a quarter.

5.2 Check every tool on a schedule

Who Marketing Time about 15 min

Why	Each tool draws on different sources and changes at its own pace. Even Google's two AI surfaces differ: AI Mode and AI Overviews share only 13.7% of their citations (Ahrefs, December 2025).
How to check	Write down which tools you checked in the last month, and when.
Fix	Run your questions in ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Mode, AI Overviews and Perplexity on the same day each week or fortnight, in a fresh chat while logged out. Run each question three to five times per tool and log the share of runs that name you, since a single run is mostly noise. SparkToro suggests 60 to 100 runs per question for a dependable rate (SparkToro, January 2026). At that volume, an AI visibility tool runs them for you.

5.3 Log mentions, citations and AI visits separately

Who Marketing Time about 10 min

Why	Being named and being used as a source are different results. ChatGPT linked to a site in 87% of its appearances but named the brand in 20.7%, while Gemini named the brand in 83.7% and linked in 21.4% (Semrush, June 2026).
How to check	For each answer, note whether you were named, whether one of your pages was a source, and which page.
Fix	Log all three on the tracking sheet. In analytics, track referrals from chatgpt.com, perplexity.ai and gemini.google.com, and treat the count as a floor. Ahrefs calls its own AI referral figures "the minimum amount of AI visitors a website receives" (Ahrefs, February 2025), and Pew found people clicked a result in 8% of visits when an AI summary appeared (Pew Research Center, July 2025). Add a "How did you hear about us?" field to your demo and contact forms, with ChatGPT and other AI tools among the options, so leads can tell you what analytics misses.

5.4 Date every change and read the result four weeks later

Who Marketing Time about 10 min

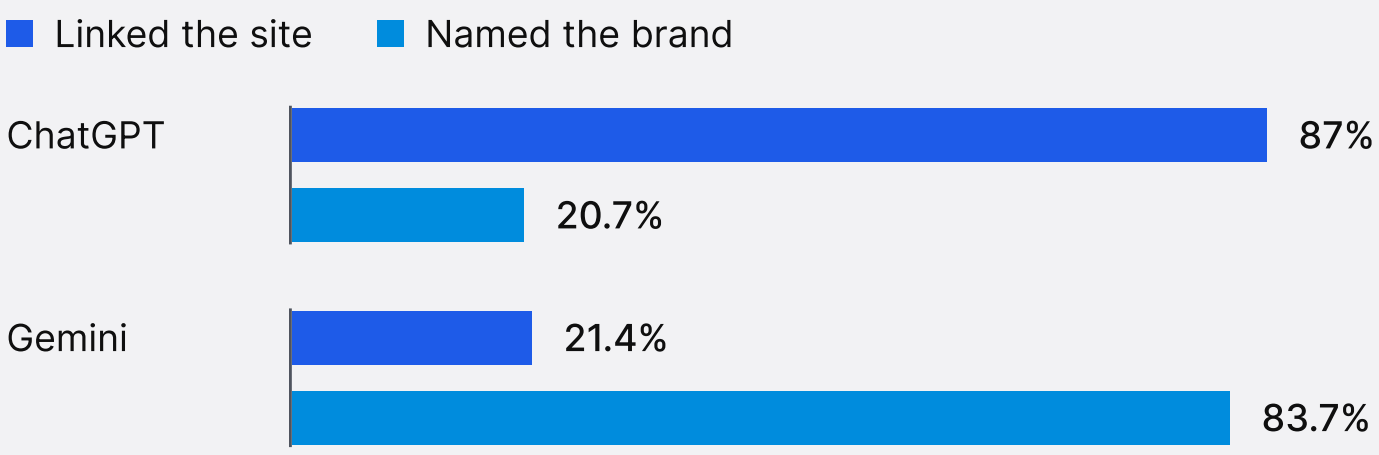
Why	Without dates you can't tie a result to a change.
How to check	Try to list what changed on your key pages last month, with dates. Gaps in that list are the problem this check fixes.
Fix	Log what changed, on which page and when, on the tracking sheet. Read the result four weeks later against the same questions.

Worth knowing

Semrush calls a link without a mention a "ghost citation", and about 61.7% of appearances in its study were ghost citations, which is why mentions and citations are tracked separately.

Cited and named are different results

Share of appearances where each tool linked to the site, and where it named the brand.



Semrush with Kevin Indig, ghost citations study, 3,981 appearances across 115 prompts, June 2026.

Further reading

SparkToro: AIs are highly inconsistent when recommending brands →

How much answers vary from run to run.

Shrink: AI visibility tools for B2B SaaS teams →

What each tracking tool does and what it costs.

Is it working?

Readings weeks 0, 4 and 8

Read your results on a fixed rhythm, so you judge trends instead of single answers. AI answers move from run to run, so the only fair test is the same questions, asked the same way, at set points. It's a reading rhythm: how quickly each tool picks up a change is still unmeasured, so treat week 8 as a first verdict.

Week	What to do	What to look for
0	Run your fixed questions three to five times in each tool, logged out. Log the share of runs that name you and which of your pages are cited. Note last month's AI visits and any "How did you hear about us?" answers.	Your starting point
1-2	Make your changes. Log each one on the change log with its page, check number and date.	A dated list of what changed
4	Run the same questions the same way. Compare pages you changed with pages you left.	Changed pages starting to appear as sources
8	Run them again and compare all three readings. Keep what moved, pick the next checks, and set the next reading for week 12.	A trend across three readings

What counts as progress

You're named in a larger share of runs for your fixed questions.

More of your pages are cited, and the cited pages are the ones you changed.

AI referral visits rise, even from a small base.

More leads say they found you through ChatGPT or another AI tool.

What to ignore

A single answer, good or bad.

Day-to-day swings in one tool.

Your brand name typed into a chatbot. Buyers start with the category, so that's where to measure.

The checklist

Checks 22
Pages 2

Tick each check for your key pages or the site as a whole, and give it an owner and a date.

	No.	Check	Owner	Date
	01	What AI reads first		
☐	1	Search and user agents allowed in robots.txt and the firewall		
☐	2	Key content in the page HTML		
☐	3	One H1, headings in order		
☐	4	Titles and URLs say what the page is		
☐	5	Structured data on every key page		
	02	Pages AI will quote		
☐	6	Question answered in the first two lines		
☐	7	Key sentences make sense on their own		
☐	8	Lists and tables for anything that's a set		
☐	9	Claims carry numbers and linked sources		
☐	10	Prices, or a starting price, published as text		
☐	11	Three to five FAQs per key page, from real questions		
☐	12	Something only you can say on each key page		

Sections 03 to 05 continue on the next page.

The checklist, continued

Checks 22
Pages 2

Tick each check for your key pages or the site as a whole, and give it an owner and a date.

	No.	Check	Owner	Date
	03	Keeping content fresh		
☐	13	Commercial pages on a three-month review		
☐	14	Updates change figures, examples and prices		
☐	15	"Last updated" shown and dateModified set		
	04	Getting other sites to vouch for you		
☐	16	A page of yours ranks on Google for each priority buyer question, and you're on the main "best of" lists		
☐	17	One description and price range on every profile		
☐	18	Active where buyers ask questions		
	05	Tracking it properly		
☐	19	10 to 20 fixed buyer questions, each matched to a page		
☐	20	Every tool checked on a schedule, three to five runs a question		
☐	21	Mentions, citations, AI visits and "How did you hear about us?" answers logged		
☐	22	Every change dated, results read at weeks 4 and 8		

Record where you stand today on the tracking sheet, over the page.

Tracking sheet

The first row of each table is an example. Fill in the next rows today, so you know where you started. An editable copy comes with the guide as a Google Sheet.

Question log

Date	Question	Tool	Named?	Cited?	Which page	Who else was named
Example: 3 Nov	Best payroll software for accountancy firms	ChatGPT	2 of 5 runs	1 of 5 runs	/pricing	Two competitors, in 4 of 5 runs

Change log

Date	Page	What changed	Check	Read on	Result
Example: 5 Nov	/pricing	Starting price and what each plan includes added as text	10	3 Dec	Pricing page cited in 2 of 5 runs, up from 1

Glossary

The terms this guide uses, in plain words.

AI Mode	Google's chat-style search, where the answer fills the page.
AI Overviews	The AI summary Google shows above the normal results for some searches.
AI referral	A visit that arrives from a link in an AI tool, such as chatgpt.com.
Citation	A link to your page, given as a source for an answer.
Crawler (or bot)	Software that fetches pages. AI companies run separate ones for search answers and for training.
Ghost citation	Semrush's term for a link to your page in an answer that never names you.
Listicle	A list-style article, such as "10 best payroll tools for accountants".
llms.txt	A proposed plain-text summary of a site for AI tools, at yoursite.com/llms.txt.
Mention	Your brand named in the answer text, with or without a link.
robots.txt	A plain-text file at yoursite.com/robots.txt that tells crawlers which pages they may fetch.
Structured data (schema)	Code in a page that states facts about it in a shared vocabulary from schema.org, such as your company name or a product's price.
User agent	The name a crawler gives when it visits, such as OAI-SearchBot. Rules in robots.txt are written per user agent.

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Stuck on a check, or short of hands to fix it?

Tell us what you found.

Start a conversation →

AI visibility checklist
November 2026

