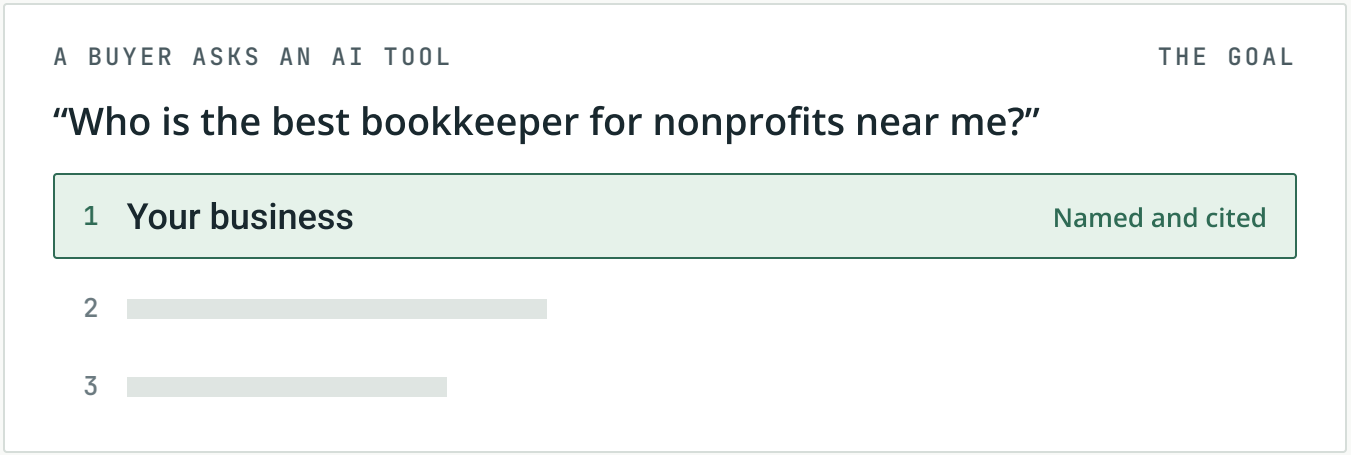
A/GEO

2026 EDITION

A PLAIN-ENGLISH PLAYBOOK FOR LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS

Local AI Presence Playbook

How to get your business named in AI answers



For local businesses and nonprofits. Read it in 30 minutes. Act on it this week.

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Get your AI Visibility Score

37 checks on your public pages. About 20 seconds.

ageoagency.com/ai-visibility-score

Scan to check your site

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By Victor Ramayrat, Principal Consultant, A/GEO. Updated October 30, 2026.
This is the short version of the A/GEO AI Visibility Engineering Playbook, written for business owners.
Free online: ageoagency.com/local-ai-presence-playbook

Who this playbook is for

This playbook is for owners and leaders of businesses and nonprofits that serve customers in a local area. It shows you how to get your business named when people ask AI tools for a business near them. You do not need a technical background.

You can read it in about 30 minutes. At the end, you will know:

- What AI visibility is, and why it affects your leads.
- How AI answers pick the businesses that they name.
- Which problem to fix first.
- Five tasks that you can do this week.
- How to tell if the work helps.

This playbook is the short version of the A/GEO AI Visibility Engineering Playbook. That playbook has 89 pages for the marketers and engineers who do the work. This playbook is for the person who decides what to do.

> **Start with one step.** Get your free AI Visibility Score at ageoagency.com/ai-visibility-score. It takes about 20 seconds.

Why leads are harder to get now

People now ask AI tools which business to choose, and this change makes three common lead problems worse. In a BrightLocal survey of 1,002 US adults, 45% used AI tools for local business recommendations in 2026. In 2025, the number was 6%.

Lead problem	What you see	How AI answers make it worse
Too few leads	Visits are flat or down. Few people fill in the form or call.	An AI answer names a few businesses. If you are not one of them, the buyer does not visit.
Leads go cold	People ask for information, then they stop replying.	Buyers check the facts in many places. A wrong price, old hours or few reviews can stop them.
No clear source	You cannot see which channel brings the customers who buy.	Visits from AI tools often show as "direct" traffic in your analytics.

You do not see the first problem in your reports. A buyer who never hears your name leaves no trace. Gartner predicted in February 2024 that traditional search engine volume would drop 25% by 2026, as people move to AI chatbots and other virtual agents.

Buyers still check what AI tells them. BrightLocal found that 97% of AI users sometimes compare AI recommendations with real reviews. Your facts and your reviews must agree everywhere.

What is AI visibility?

AI visibility is how often, and how correctly, AI tools name and describe your business when people ask for advice. AI tools include ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews and AI Mode, Gemini, Copilot, Claude and Perplexity.

Three kinds of work change your AI visibility:

Term	Full name	What the work does
SEO	Search engine optimization	Helps search engines find, read and rank your pages. Many AI tools use search results to find sources.
AEO	Answer engine optimization	Makes your page content easy to select and quote as a direct answer.
GEO	Generative engine optimization	Improves how other websites describe, support and recommend your business.

AEO and GEO build on SEO. They do not replace it. Google states that its AI features use the same basic rules as Google Search. You do not need a special AI file or special AI code to appear.

AI visibility has two parts. First, the AI tool must name you. Second, it must describe you correctly. A wrong price, an old address or a mixed-up founder can cost you the lead after the AI tool names you.

Why start with AI visibility?

AI visibility is one of the fastest places to start because most of the work improves things that you already own. You do not need a new channel, a new team or a new ad budget.

Reason	What it means for you
You fix what you have	Most tasks correct your website, your profiles and your facts. These assets already exist.
The problems are easy to find	Wrong hours, old prices, unclear pages and blocked pages show up in one check.
One fix helps three places	A clear, correct page helps search engines, AI tools and the buyers who visit your site.
The results stay	Ads stop when the budget stops. A correct fact, a clear answer and a fresh review keep working.
It shows where the leads go	When you track AI visits, you see a lead source that most reports hide.

One warning before you start: nobody can guarantee that an AI tool names your business. AI answers change from one run to the next. The work makes your business easier to find, understand, trust and recommend. Then you measure how often AI tools name you.

How do AI answers pick the businesses that they name?

AI tools collect information from your website and from other websites, then name the businesses that they can find, understand and trust. BrightLocal reports that AI answers can use reviews, directories, business websites, social media and other sources.

Five conditions make a business easier to name:

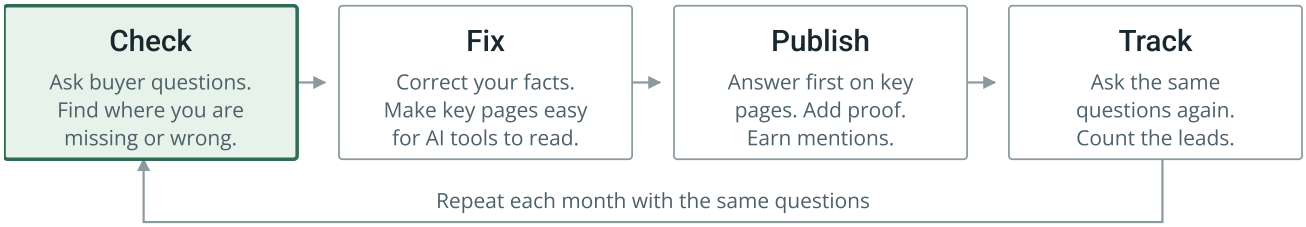
1. **AI tools can reach your pages.** Your site does not block them. Your key facts are in the page text, not only in images, PDFs or scripts.
2. **Your facts agree everywhere.** Your name, address, services, prices and leaders are the same on your site, your profiles and directory listings.
3. **Your pages answer the question first.** Kevin Indig studied 18,012 ChatGPT citations (February 2026). He found that 44.2% came from the first 30% of the page text.
4. **Other trusted websites mention you.** Reviews, news articles, associations, partners and directories give AI tools a second source.
5. **You have proof that others do not have.** Your own data, cases, methods and expert answers give AI tools a reason to cite you and not a competitor.

AI answers change every time. SparkToro and Gumshoe.ai ran 2,961 prompts in late 2025. ChatGPT and Google AI returned the same list of brands less than 1 time in 100. So do not judge your visibility from one answer. Ask the same questions many times, and count how often your business appears.

How does the A/GEO method work?

The A/GEO method runs four steps in a loop: Check, Fix, Publish and Track. Each step answers one question before the next step starts.

Start with Check, then repeat the loop each month



Check shows where you are missing or wrong. Fix removes the problems that stop AI tools from reading correct facts. Publish adds clear answers and proof. Track shows what changed, and the next Check starts from there.

Where should you start?

Start with the problem that you see now. Find it in the left column, then do the first step in the middle column. The right column gives the matching workstream in the full playbook, for your marketer or your agency.

If you see this	Do this first	Playbook workstream
You do not know if AI tools name you	Ask 10 buyer questions in three AI tools, three times each	1
You do not know what buyers ask	List the questions from sales calls, emails and reviews	2
Your pages do not show in search, or traffic dropped after a site change	Check that search engines and AI tools can read your key pages	3
AI tools get your name, address, leaders or services wrong	Write one fact sheet and correct every place that disagrees	4
A competitor gets named and you do not	Look at which websites the AI answers cite for that competitor	6
Two or more of your pages say the same thing	Merge them into one strong page	7
Your pages are thin, old or do not answer the question	Rewrite the top of each page so that it answers first	8
Your content says what everyone else says	Publish one piece of proof that only you have	9
You have good results but little outside coverage	Pitch your proof to one trade publication or association	10
You have few reviews, or your profiles are unclaimed	Claim your profiles and ask recent customers for a review	11
Prices, hours or stock are wrong online	Fix the source system first, then each listing	12
Your key knowledge is only in videos or PDFs	Publish the text next to the video or PDF	13
AI visibility goes up, but you cannot see more leads	Add a "How did you hear about us?" field to your forms	15

Workstream 14 (test each change) and workstream 16 (run the program) apply to every row. If you are not sure, start with the first row. Its results show which other rows apply to you.

What can you do this week?

You can do these five tasks in about one working day, without a developer for most of them. Do them in this order.

1. Ask AI tools about your business

1. Write 10 questions that a buyer asks before they choose a business like yours. Example: "Who is the best bookkeeper for nonprofits in San Jose?"
2. Ask each question in three AI tools. Ask each question three times, because the answers change.
3. For each answer, write down three things: are you named, are the facts correct, and which websites does the answer cite?
4. Keep the questions. You will ask the same questions again next month.

2. Write one fact sheet and fix every place that disagrees

1. Write your correct facts in one document: legal name, brand name, address, phone, hours, services, service area, price range, founders and leaders.
2. Compare each fact with your website, your Google Business Profile, LinkedIn and your top three directories.
3. Correct each difference. Start with your own website.

3. Put the answer at the top of your key pages

1. Choose your home page and your top two service pages.
2. Rewrite the first two sentences of each page. Say what you do, who it is for, where you work and how a buyer starts.
3. Add a short section of questions and answers. Use the real buyer questions from task 1.

4. Make sure that AI tools can read your site

1. Ask your web person to confirm that your robots.txt file does not block search engines or AI tools.
2. Put your key facts in page text. Text inside images is hard for AI tools to read.
3. Add structured data (schema) for your organization. The free A/GEO Schema Generator writes the code for you.

5. Ask recent customers for a review

1. Send one short, neutral request to every customer from the last three months.
2. Do not offer a reward. Do not send the request only to happy customers.
3. Reply to each new review within a few days. Thank the customer, and say something specific.

What should you avoid?

Avoid any tactic that tries to trick AI tools or buyers. These tactics can damage your reputation, break platform rules or break the law.

- **Guarantees.** Do not hire anyone who promises a ranking, a citation or a place in AI answers. Nobody controls these results.
- **Fake or filtered reviews.** Do not write fake reviews, buy reviews or ask only happy customers. The FTC rule on consumer reviews and testimonials bans fake reviews.
- **A page for every question.** Do not create many thin pages that say almost the same thing. Make one strong page for each buyer decision.
- **Bought links and paid mentions with no label.** Paid placements must say that they are paid.
- **Claims with no proof.** Do not publish a number or a result that you cannot show.
- **Many changes at once.** Change a few things, record the date, then measure. If you change everything at once, you cannot tell what worked.
- **One screenshot as proof.** One AI answer proves nothing. Count results across many runs.

How do you know if it works?

Measure five levels, from the foundation up to revenue. Do not reduce them to one score. Each level answers a different question.

Level	Question	What to count
1. Foundation	Can AI tools read correct facts about us?	Key pages that AI tools can reach. Facts that agree across your site and profiles.
2. Visibility	Do AI answers name us?	The share of answers that name you, out of all runs of your question set.
3. Citations and trust	Do AI answers cite our pages and describe us correctly?	Answers that link to your site. Answers with correct facts.
4. Behavior	Do people from AI tools visit and act?	Visits from AI tools. Form fills and calls from those visits.
5. Business	Do we get more qualified leads and revenue?	Qualified leads, sales opportunities and revenue that you can connect to AI tools.

Set up three simple tracking tools before you change anything:

1. **A "How did you hear about us?" field** on every form. Include the answer "An AI tool, such as ChatGPT." Many visits from AI tools show as "direct" traffic, so this field shows what your analytics miss.
2. **A monthly check.** Ask the same question set on the same day each month. Record the date, the AI tool and the full answer.
3. **A change log.** Write down each change and its date. Then you can connect a change to a result.

Visibility is an early signal. Qualified leads and revenue are the goal.

What does a 30-day plan look like?

In 30 days, you can set a baseline, fix your facts, improve three pages and start to track AI leads. Tick each task when you finish it.

Week 1: Check

- [ ] Get your free AI Visibility Score
- [ ] Write your 10 buyer questions
- [ ] Ask each question three times in three AI tools, and save the answers
- [ ] Add the "How did you hear about us?" field to your forms

Week 2: Fix

- [ ] Write your fact sheet
- [ ] Correct your website, Google Business Profile, LinkedIn and top directories
- [ ] Confirm that AI tools can read your key pages
- [ ] Add organization schema to your site

Week 3: Publish

- [ ] Rewrite the top of your home page and two service pages so that they answer first
- [ ] Add real buyer questions and answers to those pages
- [ ] Send the review request to recent customers
- [ ] Write each change and its date in your change log

Week 4: Track

- [ ] Ask the same 10 questions again, three times each
- [ ] Compare the results with week 1
- [ ] Count the leads that say they found you through an AI tool
- [ ] Choose the next problem from the table in "Where should you start?"

Get your free AI Visibility Score

The free A/GEO AI Visibility Score checks your website in about 20 seconds and shows what to fix first. It runs 37 checks on your public pages.

Go to ageoagency.com/ai-visibility-score, or scan the QR code. Enter your website address and select "Scan my site."

Scan to open
ageoagency.com/ai-visibility-score

When should you get help?

Get help when you do not have the time, or when the fixes need a developer. A/GEO offers three levels:

Option	Best for	What you get
Done For You	A fast first fix	A/GEO sets up your schema and a home page section of questions and answers.
Fractional AI Search & Content Growth Marketer	Growing businesses that want a person to run the work every month	A marketer who runs the Check, Fix, Publish, Track loop for you. A/GEO takes 3 clients at a time.
Services	Specific gaps	AEO, GEO and SEO, content engineering, websites that convert, analytics, and HubSpot CRM setup.

For the full method, get the free AI Visibility Engineering Playbook. To talk about your situation, contact A/GEO.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
AEO	Answer engine optimization. Work that makes your page content easy to select and quote as a direct answer.
AI tool	A service that writes answers to questions, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude or Google AI Mode.
AI visibility	How often, and how correctly, AI tools name and describe your business.
Citation	A link or source name that an AI answer shows next to a claim.
Entity	A specific person, business, product, service or place that AI tools can tell apart from others.
Fact sheet	One document that holds your correct, approved business facts.
GEO	Generative engine optimization. Work that improves how other websites describe, support and recommend your business.
Prompt	The question or instruction that a person types into an AI tool.
robots.txt	A file on your website that tells automated visitors which pages they can visit.
Schema	Code that describes your page and your business in a standard format. It helps AI tools and search engines read your facts.
SEO	Search engine optimization. Work that helps search engines find, read and rank your pages.

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- A/GEO, AI Visibility Engineering Playbook, version 2026.10.

This playbook gives general information. It does not guarantee that any AI tool names your business. It is not legal advice.