



AEO STRATEGY PLAYBOOK

WINNING AI SEARCH



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How to Shape What Models Say About Your Brand

AI search is changing the front door to buying. Buyers are no longer just starting with a Google query and a shortlist of vendors. They're asking ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Perplexity, and other AI systems to explain categories, compare products, and recommend solutions before they ever visit your website or talk to sales.

According to [Gartner](#), **51% of consumers say generative AI has already changed the way they research and discover information.** That means AI systems are no longer just tools. They're becoming intermediaries between buyers and brands.

That shift creates a new challenge for marketing and GTM leaders: your brand narrative is no longer shaped exclusively by your own content. AI models synthesize information from across the internet, combining your website, third-party reviews, community conversations, analyst content, social posts, and competitor messaging into a single answer.

Visibility alone isn't enough anymore. The goal is to influence how AI systems understand and describe your company.

In this guide, we'll share:

- How AI-powered search is rewriting how buyers discover and evaluate products
- What you can do to influence your visibility
- How to build buy-in internally (especially with executives)
- Steps to shape the way AI models talk about your brand before a buyer ever talks to sales
- And what to do once AI-driven traffic starts showing up at your door

Five Ways to Drive AI Visibility

These five steps form a practical framework for earning AI visibility and making headway on AEO buy-in internally.



Align on Measurement

Bring stakeholders together early to agree on what you're measuring and which tools will track it. For most B2B teams, that means a combination of raw visibility in AI responses and shaping how models describe your product, category, and differentiation. AI outputs are inconsistent, so use a primary tool with a secondary source for validation. Define success before you start optimizing



Build a Strong Technical Foundation

Models can't cite what they can't see. Make sure your content is structured, crawlable, and easily accessible to AI systems. Content AI crawlers can render smf clean site architecture. Fast load times are the prerequisites for everything else.



Create and Distribute Content

Invest in content on your website and owned channels like LinkedIn, but don't ignore third-party platforms. Reddit, G2, or industry publications. All of it influences how AI models form responses. Diversify your content footprint for broader AI citation.



Don't Ignore Traditional SEO

AI still relies on traditional search for up-to-date responses. A strong organic presence increases your chances of appearing in AI-generated answers. SEO and AEO are complementary strategies, not competing ones.



Control Your Controllables

AI search visibility varies from day-to-day and week-to-week. Models change constantly, and you're competing across many of them. Make sure your internal workstreams and roadmaps are aimed at things you can control: technical improvements, keyword/prompt targeting, content clarity, and content distribution. Don't overreact to small changes in visibility.

CONTENT STRATEGY

Content Needs to Fight on Two Fronts

LLMs use search to find citations for their answers. SEO still matters, but AEO-specific signals also affect who gets cited. You need both.

SEO Foundation Pillars

1. Keyword Targeting

Match the language buyers and AI use when searching for solutions.

2. Quality & Depth

Comprehensive content signals authority to both search and AI engines.

3. Brand Power

Strong brand signals increase the likelihood of citation and trust.

4. Technical / On-Page

Clean structure, schema, and metadata help crawlers parse and attribute content.

AEO Additional Considerations

1. Structure & Clarity

Write clearly, use Q&A formats, and provide direct answers AI can extract.

2. Consistency & Reinforcement

Repeat positioning across many sources so AI models converge on it.

3. Recency

Fresh, updated content signals relevance and gets prioritized in AI retrieval vs traditional SEO.

4. Connections Between Concepts

Link your brand to critical concepts so AI understands your full context and authority.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Owned and Unowned Surfaces

AEO isn't just content on your site. Winning in AI search means cultivating the full ecosystem of sources models learn from.

Owned Surfaces

Content you control directly

Website & Blog

Clear headings, FAQ schema, and direct answers to common AI prompts

Documentation

Structure for LLM ingestion: concise, factual, well-organized

Social Media & News

Distributed content is appearing in AI responses more often over time



Unowned Surfaces

Third-party content that AI models trust

Review Sites

G2, Capterra, TrustRadius, etc: AI cites these heavily for product queries

Reddit & Quora

Community content ranks high in AI-retrieved context; engage authentically

Publishing & Partnerships

Placement across partners and the broader ecosystem you operate in

COMPETITIVE CONTENT ROADMAP

Sculpting the Narrative

Visibility is important, but it's only half the battle. Understanding how your brand is referenced in AI search and influencing that is just as important.

Phase 1: Visibility

Create content that positions you within your industry as a whole. Establish your brand as a top source for generic category prompts. Focus on content targeting high-volume, high-intent keywords.

- "Best of" and category roundup content (unfortunately, it works in small doses)
- Review site presence (G2, Gartner, Capterra)
- Reddit community engagement at scale

Phase 2: Narrative Sculpting

Shape how AI models describe your brand relative to competitors. Target comparison and alternative queries with content that positions your differentiation clearly.

- "Vs" content and targeted head-to-head comparisons
- "technical" content breaking down complex topics into content models want to cite
- Brand association sculpting: know your differentiators and create a consistent drum beat across your content

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT

Messaging AEO to Executives

Frame AEO around outcomes leadership cares about: pipeline, competitive positioning, and brand authority, not the mechanics of how AI models work. Tracking visibility is great, but it doesn't tie back to metrics that matter directly.

THE BOARD PITCH

Connect AEO to Revenue

Many buyers now start their research in AI tools instead of just Google. If you don't show up, competitors will. AEO protects pipeline by putting our brand where modern buyers look first.

THE CFO PITCH

Efficiency, Not Just Spend

AEO compounds like SEO. Content serves double duty across organic search and AI visibility. Unlike paid, results don't vanish when your budget stops.

THE CRO PITCH

Competitive Displacement

When buyers ask AI to compare solutions, we want to be mentioned and accurately positioned. AEO gives us influence over that conversation before a rep is involved.

THE CMO PITCH

Brand Narrative Control

AI models synthesize web content to describe brands. Without AEO, that narrative is shaped by whatever is most accessible, which could be anything (including competitor messaging). AEO means we can shape the story.

LANGUAGE CHEAT SHEET

Framing Internal Conversations Around AEO

Instead of:

"We need to optimize for AI"

"AEO is the next SEO"

"We need to game the AI algorithms"

"AEO is a marketing project"

"AI is stealing our traffic"

"We need to rank in ChatGPT"

"We should create content for AI"

Try:

"Here are the prompts in ChatGPT that we need to show up there"

"AEO builds on SEO. The same fundamentals work for us across both channels"

"We need to make it easy for AI to find, cite, and position us accurately"

"This is a pipeline protection initiative that marketing leads"

"Buyer behavior is shifting and we need to meet them where they are"

"We need to be the brand AI models cite when buyers ask about our category"

"We should make our existing content easier for AI to find, understand, and cite"

AEO Needs to Be a Core Part of Your Strategy

AEO is not a replacement for SEO, content marketing, brand strategy, or demand generation. It's the convergence point where all of those disciplines start influencing how AI systems interpret your brand.

The companies that succeed won't treat this as a one-off optimization project or a scramble to "hack" AI rankings. They'll build operational muscle around content clarity, technical accessibility, consistent positioning, and ecosystem-wide presence.

In other words, the same fundamentals that create durable market leadership now also shape AI visibility.



And while the tooling, models, and algorithms will continue to evolve at breakneck speed, one thing is already clear: buyers are outsourcing more discovery and evaluation to AI systems every quarter. The brands that proactively shape those conversations today will have a major advantage over the ones that wait for AI visibility to become a reporting line item on next year's board deck.

Or put differently: if AI is becoming the new research assistant for your buyers, your job is to make sure it tells the right story about your brand.

How To Convert Your AI-Driven Traffic

Getting cited by AI is only half the battle. The real challenge starts after the click.

AI-driven buyers behave differently from traditional inbound traffic. They arrive more informed, more opinionated, and further along in their evaluation process. In many cases, they've already asked AI tools to compare vendors, summarize your category, identify alternatives, and explain your differentiation before ever reaching your website.

That means your job is no longer to introduce your product. It's to validate the buyer's hypothesis quickly and help them build internal confidence around the decision.

This is where most B2B experiences break down.

A buyer goes from ChatGPT or Claude expecting immediate clarity, proof, and momentum — and instead lands on a generic homepage, a gated PDF, or a "Book a Demo" form that forces them backward in the buying journey. That's the equivalent of making someone who already read the executive summary sit through the table of contents again.

Buyers want to experience the product immediately.

That's why the highest-performing AI conversion strategies are built around buyer enablement: giving prospects the ability to explore, validate, and share product experiences on their own terms.



Give Buyers the Experience They Came For

With platforms like [Consensus](#), revenue teams can turn AI-driven traffic into interactive product experiences instead of static landing pages. Buyers can engage with personalized demos, explore relevant use cases, and answer their own questions before speaking with sales.

More importantly, those experiences create visibility into the buying group itself. Instead of guessing whether your champion shared the deck internally, you can see:

- Which stakeholders engaged with a demo, tour, or piece of content
- What features or workflows they cared about
- Where interest increased or dropped off
- Which accounts are showing real buying intent

Reps stop acting like tour guides and start acting like buyer coaches — helping teams navigate decisions.

The companies winning AI-driven demand generation are building experiences around a simple principle: don't force buyers to restart the journey once they reach your site. That means:

- Interactive demos instead of static screenshots
- Self-guided exploration instead of "contact us to learn more"
- Personalized proof instead of generic messaging
- Buyer intelligence instead of anonymous web traffic
- And if you do make it to that live moment — delivering a personalized experience only you can deliver

AI is compressing the research phase of the buying journey. Buyer enablement is what converts that compressed attention into pipeline.



About Consensus

Consensus is the world's most trusted AI-powered Interactive Demo Platform built for this reality—delivering intelligent, always-on product experiences that accelerate and inform decisions.

Today's buyers research independently and decide faster than ever, making traditional demos slow, rigid, and often wasted. Consensus transforms the buying motion by delivering personalized product experiences that buyers can explore and share on their own terms.

Marketing gains visibility into real product engagement tied directly to pipeline. Presales scales expertise without repeating demos. Sellers focus on opportunities with verified interest and clear intent, rather than passive curiosity.

The result is measurable: better-qualified deals, stronger stakeholder alignment, and faster sales cycles.

Trusted by 60% of the world's largest software companies, including Oracle, Atlassian, Salesforce, and SAP, Consensus is #1 in Demo Automation on G2 and recognized as a Great Place to Work.

Learn more at goconsensus.com

[Watch a Demo](#)