ConvertLab360

AI Visibility 2026: why AI doesn't recommend your business

How ChatGPT, Gemini, AI Overviews and AI Mode choose whom to recommend — and what to change on your site, off it and in Google Ads so AI doesn't just cite you but recommends you. Diagnostics by 7 scenarios, Google's official rules, verified numbers instead of myths, a 30-day plan and worksheets.

FREE PLAYBOOK · 25 PAGES · NOVEMBER 2026

01 · Essentials
10 rules, diagnostics by 7 scenarios, 30-day plan

02 · Your site
How AI chooses, question map, quotable paragraphs, trust pages, authors

03 · Off-site & ads
Sources per AI, reviews and directories, AI Max, CRM leads

04 · Measurement
Three levels of outcome, prompt set, numbers and myths, worksheets

THE MOST VALUABLE PART COMES FIRST

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How to read the labels

GOOGLE — official Google Search Central documentation and Google Ads Help (as of November 2026). PRACTICE — agency experience and independent studies with an open method; not a platform rule, test it on your own data. CALCULATION — derived by arithmetic; plug in your own numbers. UNPROVEN — a popular claim for which we found no verifiable source.

How to use this playbook

If AI doesn't mention you, or mentions you but doesn't recommend you, start with pp. 4–5 (diagnostics): find your scenario and follow the actions in the table. Planning systematic work? Follow the 30-day plan (p. 6): bot access and indexing first, then the question map and pages, then off-site sources and measurement. Launching AI Max? Page 18 is a must. Print the worksheets (p. 24) and fill them in every month.

IF YOU READ ONLY ONE PAGE

10 rules of AI visibility

01 **AI search is built on regular SEO** GOOGLE

Google's generative features rely on its core ranking systems. A page that isn't indexed or isn't allowed to show as a snippet won't make it into an answer. Indexing and bot access come first (p. 15).

02 **Answer the questions the customer never typed** GOOGLE

AI breaks a question into several searches (query fan-out). Build a map: the buyer's main question + 8–12 sub-questions, and a specific answer to each on your site (p. 9).

03 **Don't build a page for every sub-query** GOOGLE

Google explicitly calls separate content for every variation, made to rank, a violation of its scaled content abuse policy. Fewer pages, each with a real answer.

04 **Write paragraphs that work outside the page** PRACTICE

AI takes a passage, not the whole page. Name + for whom + condition + number in one paragraph. Test: paste the paragraph into an empty document — it must still make sense (p. 10).

05 **Answer first** PRACTICE

44% of ChatGPT citations come from the first 30% of a page's text. The first paragraph under each H2 is a 40–60-word answer; the heading uses the customer's wording (p. 11).

06 **Show who you're a fit for** PRACTICE

What matters is not just "were we mentioned" but "for which customer". Prices or "from", case studies with numbers, pages per customer type, comparisons, reviews (p. 12).

07 **A real author and fresh data** PRACTICE

An author page with experience and LinkedIn, linked from articles. Update key pages at least every 3 months — the content, not just the date (p. 13).

08 **Work with the sources AI relies on** PRACTICE

Google AI and ChatGPT use different sources, and they change every month. "Before → after" reviews, niche directories, genuine roundups, one company description everywhere (pp. 16–17).

09 **Audit your site before AI Max** GOOGLE

AI Max writes headlines from your pages and picks where to send the click. Old prices, discontinued services and unsupported claims on your site become your ads (p. 18).

10 **Measure three levels separately** PRACTICE

Cited → recommended → action (lead, deal). A single "visibility score" won't tell you where it breaks. A monthly prompt set + Search Console + CRM (pp. 8, 20).

FIND YOUR SYMPTOM

Seven scenarios: 1–4

Before looking for the cause in your copy, check the technical basics (p. 15): are the pages indexed and can AI crawlers get in? Then find your scenario. One check proves nothing — AI answers are unstable, so look at your prompt set across several runs (p. 20).

Symptom	Typical causes	What to do
1. AI barely mentions you	**On the site:** bots blocked (robots.txt, CDN, bot protection); pages not indexed; few pages that answer customers' questions. **Off the site:** no reviews, no profiles in niche directories, no mentions in roundups and media.	1) Bot access and indexing (p. 15). 2) Question map and gaps (p. 9). 3) Profiles in 3–5 niche directories with one description, first detailed reviews (p. 17).
2. Present in one topic, missing in another "recommended for braces, not veneers"	**AI doesn't trust you on the topic:** no expertise in the content, no mentions of this service on third-party sites. **Or specific queries drop:** the answer isn't on the site or is buried deep down.	A separate strong service page with numbers and a case study; answers to sub-questions as H2s in the top third; mentions of this exact service in directories and reviews.
3. Mentioned but not recommended	Few or generic reviews ("all great"); no ratings in directories or inconsistent descriptions; no proof of results; AI assigns you to a different customer type.	Reviews in the "situation before → what was done → result with a number" format; ratings and a consistent description in directories; case studies and pages per customer type (p. 12).
4. Some AIs recommend you, others don't AI Overviews yes, ChatGPT no	Different systems rely on different sources: Google — your site, YouTube, Google Business Profile; ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude — Wikipedia, review sites, Reddit, "top 10" roundups.	See which domains the AI that skips you actually cites (p. 16) and get present there. Google Business Profile only affects Google AI.

When to expect results

In our practice, changes on and off the site show up in AI answers no sooner than 3–4 weeks: the page has to be recrawled and new sources indexed. The cycle: spot a change in the data → identify the scenario → act → recheck in 3–4 weeks → repeat. PRACTICE

FIND YOUR SYMPTOM

Seven scenarios: 5–7 and first checks

Symptom	Typical causes	What to do
5. Competitors grow faster	AI started relying on a new source where the competitor is present and you aren't; the competitor collected reviews at scale; appeared in new roundups and on partner sites.	Compare the lists of cited domains across two months (p. 16); check the number and freshness of the competitor's reviews; find roundups where you can honestly be included.
6. Mentioned, but no traffic	AI links not to you but to a directory, Wikipedia or a review site — because it trusts them more; your site has no page that directly answers the question.	Check where the link in the answer goes. Add About, pricing or "from", service, use-case and comparison pages (p. 12). Check AI traffic in GA4 (p. 20).
7. Named without a link	A niche quirk: nobody gets links — or competitors do and you don't.	If nobody does, there's little to do; work on mentions. If competitors do, analyse their cited pages (structure, numbers, freshness) and make yours better.

First checks for scenario 1 — 15 minutes

Where	What to check	Good if
robots.txt	Disallow rules for GPTBot, OAI-SearchBot, PerplexityBot, ClaudeBot, Google-Extended	No blocks for the bots you want to let in
CDN / bot protection	Cloudflare or your host's CDN may block AI bots by default	In the CDN log AI bots get 200, not 403/429
Search Console → URL Inspection	Page is indexed, snippets allowed	Indexed, no `nosnippet`
Search Console → generative features	The site isn't excluded from AI Overviews / AI Mode by the control setting	Site is eligible GOOGLE
Search for your brand name	What AI knows about you: description, services, city, who you serve	The description matches your site

Don't test bot access by spoofing the User-Agent

A request from your computer that merely claims to be GPTBot is often blocked by the CDN as a fake, while the real bot gets through. Look at the logs or the CDN's AI-bot report, not `curl` with someone else's User-Agent. PRACTICE

WHAT TO DO OVER THE NEXT 30 DAYS

30-day plan

Order matters: there's no point rewriting copy if bots can't see the page, and no point collecting mentions if your site has no page AI could link to.

Week	What to do	Outcome
1 basics	AI bot access and indexing of key pages (p. 15). Prompt set: 10–15 real buyer questions × ChatGPT, Gemini, AI Mode, Perplexity — first run (worksheet A, p. 24). Turn on the generative AI report in Search Console and an AI channel in GA4 (p. 20).	A baseline: where you appear, for whom, which sources
2 map	Question map for your 2–3 main services (p. 9): main question + 8–12 sub-questions, where the answer is on the site. Paragraph test for 20 key paragraphs (p. 10). Identify your scenario (pp. 4–5).	A prioritised list of gaps
3 site	Close the gaps: H2 sections with the answer first, numbers and sources, trust pages (prices or "from", case studies, use cases, reviews, comparisons), author pages (pp. 11–13). Change the modified date only where the content changed.	Pages AI can link to
4 off-site	See which domains the prompt-set answers cite (p. 16). Profiles in 3–5 niche directories with one description; ask 10 clients for detailed reviews; 1–2 genuine roundups or partner publications (p. 17). If you run Google Ads with AI Max — site audit and controls (p. 18).	Trust signals off the site
+3–4 weeks	Second run of the prompt set with the same questions. Compare: mentions, "for whom", sources, links. Record what changed in the worksheet and go back to diagnostics.	First measurement of change

What not to do in the first 30 days

Don't generate dozens of near-identical pages for every phrasing of a query, don't buy mentions or reviews, don't make llms.txt or "AI markup" your main move — for Google Search it does nothing (p. 14). Don't judge results by a single run of a single chatbot.

THE MODEL BEHIND EVERY RULE

How AI chooses whom to recommend

When someone asks a complex question, AI doesn't search for one phrase. It breaks the question into several searches, collects candidate pages and takes specific passages from them to build one answer.

Stage	What happens	What it means for you
1. Question	"Which CRM should a 10-person sales team choose?"	Your customer describes a task, not a keyword
2. Fan-out	AI runs related searches: CRM for small business · price per user · Telegram integration · comparison of the two leaders · user reviews GOOGLE	You need to be found for the sub-questions, not just the head keyword
3. Candidates	A set of relevant pages is pulled from the index for each search GOOGLE	The page must be indexed and answer a specific sub-question
4. Passages	AI looks at specific information on the pages and takes the fragments it needs GOOGLE	A paragraph gets quoted, not the whole page (p. 10)
5. Choice	The answer contains a few recommended brands and source links	You may be cited while a competitor is recommended (p. 8)

Google's example

For "how to get rid of weeds in my lawn", additional searches might be: best weed killers for lawns, how to remove weeds without chemicals, how to prevent weeds. The answer is built from all of them. GOOGLE

What practice shows

Sub-questions change from run to run: in a test of two identical runs 8 minutes apart, not a single one matched. And not every ChatGPT answer searches the web at all — so classic SEO for the head query remains the foundation. PRACTICE

Takeaway

You won't guess the exact sub-questions, and you don't need to. Cover the buyer's decision: everything they need to know before saying "yes" — with clear answers on strong pages of your site.

THE MAIN MISTAKE IS COUNTING MENTIONS ONLY

Cited, recommended, chosen

AI can take the answer to “how often should I descale a coffee machine” from your site — and in the same answer recommend three competitors’ machines. You won the source link and lost the sale. Being cited is not being recommended. PRACTICE

Level	What it means	Where to get data	If it breaks here, look at
1. Cited	Your page became a source for the answer	Search Console (impressions in AI features), prompt set	Pages and paragraphs: question map, paragraph test (pp. 9–10)
2. Recommended	Your brand is in the short list of recommendations	Prompt set: who is recommended for each question	Positioning: “for whom”, reviews, proof, off-site sources (pp. 12, 17)
3. Action	Lead, call, demo, purchase	GA4 (AI channel), CRM, “how did you hear about us” field	Buying experience: where the link goes, landing page, form (p. 12)
4. Deal	The lead became a customer	CRM	Lead quality and hand-off to sales (p. 19)

Not “were we mentioned” but “for whom”

A company wants to sell to chains with 20 locations, but AI recommends it as a budget option for home use. The mention is there — the customer is wrong. Check both ways: **which ideas AI links to your brand** (ask “what is [brand] and who is it for”) and **which brands AI links to your idea** (ask “who is best for [your segment]”). Together that’s a map of what the system “thinks” about you. PRACTICE

Two campaigns — which one wins the report

Campaign A: 500 leads, almost nobody buys. Campaign B: 80 leads, a third become customers (~27). A weekly report by leads picks A; the business earns on B. Mentions and traffic are leading indicators; the scoreboard is customers and profit by channel.

CALCULATION

WIN THE SEARCHES THE CUSTOMER NEVER TYPED

The buyer's question map

Take the main question a customer brings to the decision and write down everything they need to learn before saying "yes". For every sub-question, find a specific answer on your site. None — that's a gap.

Buyer's sub-question	Example: a PPC agency	Where the answer is on the site
Price	How much Google Ads management costs and what it depends on	Service page, "pricing" block
Minimum budget	From what ad budget it makes sense to start	Service FAQ
Timeline	When the launch is and when the first results come	"How we work" section
What's included	Analytics, creatives, landing pages — included or extra	Service page
Who it's for	E-commerce or lead gen, which niche, what size	Industry / use-case pages
Proof	Case studies with numbers in my niche	Case studies
Comparison	Agency vs freelancer vs in-house team	Comparison page
Risks	Contract, who owns the account, how to leave	FAQ, terms
Measurement	How you report and on which metrics	Service page
Reviews	What current clients say	Reviews page, directories

Where to find sub-questions

Customer questions in emails and calls, objections from sales, Google autocomplete and "People also ask", the Search Console queries report — and AI itself: ask ChatGPT and Gemini what's worth knowing before choosing.

PRACTICE

Fewer pages, more answers

Sub-questions are H2 sections and FAQ on a strong page, not separate thin pages. Google treats separate content for every variation, made to rank, as scaled content spam. GOOGLE

AI TAKES A PASSAGE, NOT A PAGE

A paragraph AI can quote

AI cuts 1–3 sentences out of your page and drops them into its answer. If a paragraph leans on the previous one (“as we wrote above”, “this service”, “our approach”), it means nothing outside the page — and won’t be taken.

> **Service / product name + for whom + condition or limit + a number or verifiable fact**

Type	✗ Doesn’t work outside the page	✓ Works outside the page
Service	“We offer a full range of services for your business and guarantee an individual approach.”	“Google Ads management at ConvertLab360 is for e-commerce and lead-gen companies with an ad budget from $3,000 a month; launch in 5–7 business days, month-to-month billing, no long-term contract.”
Product	“Our coffee machine is the perfect choice for those who value quality.”	“[Model] is a coffee machine for offices of 10–30 people: up to 200 cups a day, automatic weekly descaling, 2-year warranty.” illustrative example
Case study	“We significantly improved the client’s results.”	“For an auto-parts store with an $8,000 monthly budget, we cut the cost per order from $42 to $29 in 6 weeks by rebuilding Shopping campaigns around product margin.” illustrative example — use your real numbers

The copy test — 30 seconds

Paste the paragraph into an empty document. Is it clear **what** it’s about, **for whom** and **under what condition**? Is there at least one verifiable detail? If you need the previous paragraph to understand it — rewrite. Test 20 key paragraphs of your site this way (worksheet, p. 24). PRACTICE

Put the condition next to the claim

“From $3,000 a month” in the same sentence as the service, not in a footnote below. AI takes the sentence with whatever is in it; a limit in another section may be missed — and AI will recommend you to someone you don’t fit.

ANSWER FIRST, DETAILS LATER

Page structure for AI answers

A study of ChatGPT citations found: 44.2% of cited passages come from the first 30% of a page's text, 31.1% from the middle, 24.7% from the last third. The end of a page gets cited too, but the most important things belong at the top. PRACTICE

Element	How to do it
H1	In the customer's words: "Google Ads management for online stores", not "Our services"
First paragraph	The answer to the main question using the formula on p. 10: what, for whom, condition, number
H2 = customer question	"How much does...", "From what budget...", "What's included..." — sub-questions from the map (p. 9)
Under every H2	The first 40–60 words are a direct answer. Then details, an example, a table or list if it helps
Numbers and sources	Your own numbers (anonymised), a link to the primary source, a date. No "statistics" without a source
Proof next to the claim	A case study, review or screenshot in the same section as the promise
FAQ at the bottom	5–8 real questions from sales, each answer self-contained
Author and date	Who wrote it, their role, a link to the author page; the date of the last substantive update

How many words — there's no norm

GOOGLE

Google says outright there is no ideal length and no need to artificially split text into short chunks "for AI". Length is whatever it takes to answer.

Tables are for comparisons

Plans, "us vs the alternative", specifications — as a table: easy to read for both a person and a model. But a table doesn't replace the answer paragraph above it. PRACTICE

AI RECOMMENDS THE BUSINESS IT CAN DESCRIBE BY “FOR WHOM” AND “WHY”

Trust pages

To recommend a business, AI needs answers to the questions a buyer asks: how much it costs, who it fits, what proves it, how it differs. If your site doesn’t have those answers, AI takes them from a directory, a review site or a competitor’s page — and the link goes there. PRACTICE

Page	What it should contain	Have it?
Pricing or “from”	Packages, a range or “from $...”, what’s included, what the price depends on. If you don’t publish prices — honestly, what they depend on, and the minimum threshold	☐
Service / product	A separate page per main service: for whom, process, timeline, what’s included, FAQ	☐
Case studies	“Point A → what we did → point B” with numbers, niche, budget, timeline	☐
Use cases / industries	A page per customer type: their pain, their goal, a relevant case study	☐
Reviews	Real, with name and company (with permission), with specifics “before → after”	☐
Comparison	“Us vs the typical alternative” (freelancer, in-house team, tool) — honest, including who we’re *not* a fit for	☐
About	Who you are, since when, the team, where you operate, one positioning sentence — the same as in directories	☐
Authors	A page for each author (p. 13)	☐
Contacts and terms	How to get in touch, contract terms, how to exit — these are buyer questions too	☐

“Who we’re not for” is a strong signal

An honest limit (“we don’t work with budgets under $3,000”, “we don’t do SEO”) helps AI recommend you to the right customer, not to anyone. Fewer irrelevant leads, more recommendations where you’re genuinely strong.

WHO WROTE IT AND WHEN IT WAS TRUE

Author, reviewer and freshness

Author page: fields

- [ ] Photo, name, role
- [ ] 2–3 sentences: why this person is an expert on the topic
- [ ] Experience: years, niches, scale (budgets, number of projects)
- [ ] Certifications with a verification link
- [ ] LinkedIn and other profiles
- [ ] A list of the author's articles
- [ ] Person markup with `sameAs` pointing to the profiles
- [ ] Articles link the author to this page, not to "About"

A reviewer — when you need one

For topics where a mistake costs money or health (finance, medicine, law, tax), add an expert reviewer: name, qualification, review date. It's a signal both for people and for systems that assess trust in a page. PRACTICE

Freshness: what to update

Numbers, screenshots, platform feature names, prices, new sections for questions that have come up. Key pages — at least every 3 months. PRACTICE

What you did	Change the updated date?
New numbers, a section, an example, screenshots	**Yes** — and show what changed ("Updated: November 2026 — new data...")
Fixed a typo, swapped an image	**No** — that isn't new information
Changed nothing but want "freshness"	**No** — a new date without new content misleads both people and search

Start with old pages that get impressions

Sort pages by Search Console impressions for 3 months and flag those not updated for over 3 months. The top of that list with commercial intent is your first update batch. The rest come later.

SAVE MONEY ON “AI HACKS”

What Google says you don’t need

In May 2026 Google published a separate Search Central guide on how sites appear in generative search features (AI Overviews, AI Mode). Its core message: there is no separate “AI optimization” — the same fundamentals as regular search apply. GOOGLE

Popular advice	What Google says
Add llms.txt	Google Search doesn’t use it. The file does no harm and may be useful to other AIs, but it does nothing for AI Overviews and AI Mode
Special markup “for AI”	There is no separate markup for generative features. Schema.org is for rich results, not an input into AI answers
Cut text into short chunks	Artificial splitting (“chunking”) isn’t needed; there is no ideal length
A page for every phrasing	Mass-producing pages for query variations to rank violates the scaled content abuse policy
Get mentions anywhere	Google considers artificial, inauthentic mentions not as helpful; genuine ones are what count

What you actually need GOOGLE

- [ ] The page is indexed and eligible to show as a snippet — the condition for appearing in an AI answer
- [ ] Helpful, original content created for people
- [ ] A good page experience: speed, mobile, no intrusive pop-ups
- [ ] Technical accessibility: Googlebot sees important content as text, not only in images or behind scripts

Our position

We don’t sell llms.txt or “AI markup” as a service and we don’t build 50 thin pages for sub-queries. The money is better spent on 5 strong pages with answers, genuine reviews and measuring deals.

CHECK BEFORE REWRITING COPY

Technical basics

What	How to check	Typical trap
AI bot access	robots.txt: GPTBot, OAI-SearchBot, ChatGPT-User, PerplexityBot, ClaudeBot. CDN report or server logs: response codes for these bots	A CDN or bot protection blocks them by default and the owner doesn't know
Googlebot and indexing	Search Console → URL Inspection; the Pages report	Key pages "Discovered – currently not indexed" or with a wrong canonical
Snippets allowed	No `nosnippet`, no too-small `max-snippet`, no `data-nosnippet` on important blocks GOOGLE	A directive set long ago "to protect content" removes the page from AI answers
Generative features control	Search Console: the setting for the site's participation in AI Overviews / AI Mode GOOGLE	Switched off and forgotten
Google-Extended	robots.txt	Blocking it does **not** remove the site from AI Overviews and AI Mode — they run on Googlebot GOOGLE
Content as text	Open the page with JavaScript off; view the rendered HTML in URL Inspection	Prices, FAQ, reviews load via script or exist only as an image
Speed and mobile	Core Web Vitals in Search Console (field data)	Heavy banners and widgets above the fold

Want AI to know you?

Let in the search bots of AI services (OAI-SearchBot, PerplexityBot): they collect pages for answers with links. Model-training bots (GPTBot, Google-Extended) are a separate decision for your content policy.

Don't check with curl

A CDN may reject a request with a spoofed User-Agent as fake while the real bot gets through. Look at the CDN report or logs — they show real requests and blocks per bot. PRACTICE

ONE STRATEGY FOR EVERY AI DOESN'T WORK

Every AI has its own sources

Different systems rely on different sites. That's why a business can be in AI Overviews and missing from ChatGPT — or the other way round. See which domains the answers in your niche cite: that's your list of off-site platforms. PRACTICE

System	What it relies on more often	What to do
Google AI Overviews, AI Mode, Gemini	Google's index: your site, YouTube, Google Business Profile, forums that rank in Google	Strong pages, videos with answers, a business profile with reviews
ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, Copilot	Their own search and third-party indexes: Wikipedia, review sites and directories, Reddit and forums, "top 10" roundups, media	Niche directories, reviews, genuine roundups, answers in communities

Sources change every month PRACTICE

What was measured	Result
Share of cited domains that changes within a month	AI Overviews 59.3%, ChatGPT 54.1%, Copilot 53.4%, Perplexity 40.5%; over 6 months — 70–90% Profound, 2025
Weekly change in cited domains	AI Mode 56%, ChatGPT 74%; yet 86% of prompts have a stable core of 1–5 domains SISTRIX, April 2026
Another measurement of the same stability	96.8% of domains don't change week to week BrightEdge
Overlap with classic results	Only 12% of URLs cited by AI are in Google's top 10 for the same query Ahrefs

How to read this

The numbers differ because the methods differ (which AI, how many prompts, domain or URL). The shared conclusion: there's a small stable core of sources and a large "tail" that keeps changing. Stay in your niche's core and review the source list monthly, not once a year.

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT YOU

Off-site: reviews, directories, roundups

1. One description everywhere

One positioning sentence — on the site, on LinkedIn, in your Google Business Profile, in every directory. Different descriptions ("SEO agency" here, "marketing studio" there) blur what AI "knows" about you.

2. Niche directories

3–5 platforms that AI cites in your niche (p. 16): a fully completed profile, services, prices or "from", case studies, reviews. Google Business Profile affects Google AI, not ChatGPT.

3. Genuine roundups

Reviews and "top N" lists in media and from partners where you can honestly appear. Paid or fake mentions — no: Google considers inauthentic mentions not as helpful, and customers can tell.

GOOGLE

4. Answers in communities

Helpful answers on forums, Reddit, LinkedIn — from an expert, without an ad in every sentence. These are sources ChatGPT and Perplexity often cite.

PRACTICE

A review that works: "before → what was done → after"

✗ Generic	✓ Specific
"All great, recommend!"	"We're a dental chain with 4 branches. Before working together, a Google Ads lead cost us $85. The team rebuilt the campaigns and set up call tracking; 3 months later — $52 per lead and 30% more bookings." illustrative example — the review needs the client's real numbers

Ask the client to mention: **who they are** (industry, size), **what the problem was**, **what you did**, **what the result was**. Give a link to the specific platform and a short prompt template, but don't write the review for the client.

How many reviews you need

There's no verified threshold. A study found that businesses AI recommended had on average 133 Google reviews versus 11 for those it ignored. That's correlation, not cause — but the direction is clear: more detailed and fresh reviews. PRACTICE

WHAT GEO GUIDES LEAVE OUT

AI Max: your site becomes your ad copy

AI Max for Search broadens query matching, writes ad text from your site and picks the landing page. Anything outdated on your site can end up in an ad. GOOGLE

Feature	What it does	How to turn it off
Search term matching	Shows ads for queries beyond your keywords, based on your site and ads	At ad group level
Text customization	Headlines and descriptions generated from landing pages and your ads	At campaign level
Final URL expansion	Google picks the site page most relevant to the query	At campaign level; or URL exclusions
Controls	Brand inclusions and exclusions, URL exclusions, locations of interest from the query	—

Site governance audit before switching it on

01 Prices and promotions

Old prices and finished promotions on pages that are still indexed.

02 Services and products

Discontinued services, out-of-stock products, pages for lines of business you no longer serve.

03 Regions and segments

Cities, countries, customer types you don't serve — in the page copy.

04 Claims

"Guaranteed results", "#1", numbers without backing — in ads that's a risk of disapproval and complaints.

05 Pages ads must not go to

Blog, careers, policies, old landers — exclude URLs or turn expansion off.

What it delivers GOOGLE

According to Google's internal 2025 data — on average +14% conversions or conversion value at a similar CPA/ROAS; around 27% in campaigns dominated by exact and phrase match. That's platform data, not an independent test: launch it as an experiment.

Practitioners' caution PRACTICE

Generated text can serve before you review it, and URL expansion has no page pinning. Review weekly in the first month (worksheet B, p. 24).

AI-DRIVEN ADS LEARN FROM WHAT YOU FEED BACK

CRM leads back into Google Ads

If Google Ads only sees “form submitted”, automated bidding will look for more submitted forms — spam and irrelevant ones included. Send back from your CRM which leads became qualified and which became customers, and the system looks for people like your customers. GOOGLE

Stage in Google Ads	What it means	Where it comes from
Lead	A submitted form, a call	Site tag + enhanced conversions for leads
Qualified lead	Matches your criteria (budget, niche, region)	CRM status → import into Google Ads
Converted lead	Became a customer, has a deal value	CRM status and value → import

4 questions for your team before setup

01 What is a “qualified lead” for us — criteria in writing?

02 How many days, on average, from lead to deal?

03 How many qualified and closed leads per month come from ads?

04 Who updates the status in the CRM, and how fast?

Rules GOOGLE

- [ ] Don’t mix funnel stages in one optimisation goal
- [ ] Different values for different stages and lead types
- [ ] Lead journey mapping in Google Ads — to see where a lead gets stuck
- [ ] Import via Data Manager: Google is moving the old upload flow to the new one from 15.06.2026 — check your integration

When not to bid on closed deals

If ads bring few closed deals (single digits a month) or the deal cycle is longer than a few weeks, the system won’t have enough signal. Optimise for qualified leads and pass closed deals as value and for reporting. PRACTICE

WHAT TO MEASURE EVERY MONTH

Monthly measurement

Source	What it gives you	Limitations
Prompt set	10–15 real buyer questions × ChatGPT, Gemini, AI Mode, Perplexity. Record: are you there, who you're recommended for, which strengths and weaknesses are named, which sources are cited (worksheet A, p. 24)	Answers are unstable: look at the trend across several runs, not one answer
Search Console → generative AI report	Impressions of your pages in AI Overviews and AI Mode — by page, country, device, date GOOGLE	Impressions only: no clicks, no queries
GA4	A separate channel group for AI: chatgpt.com, perplexity.ai, gemini.google.com, copilot.microsoft.com and others; conversions from them	Part of AI traffic arrives without a referrer and lands in "direct"
CRM	Leads and deals from AI sources + a "how did you hear about us" field in the form or on the call	Customer answers are imprecise but show what analytics can't

Diagnosis by level

What you see	Where to look
Cited, but not recommended	"For whom" positioning, reviews, off-site sources (pp. 12, 17)
Recommended, but no leads	The link doesn't go to you; a weak landing page or form (p. 5, scenario 6)
Leads, but no deals	Lead quality, "who we're not for", hand-off to sales (p. 19)

ONLY WHAT HAS A SOURCE AND A DATE

Numbers worth knowing

Number	What it means	Source
900M people use ChatGPT every week	February 2026; a year earlier — 400M	OpenAI, 27.02.2026
+90% — how much better AI traffic converts than other traffic	US retail, September 2026. In March 2026 it was +42%, a year earlier −38%: the advantage is recent	Adobe
44.2% of ChatGPT citations come from the first 30% of the text	31.1% from the middle, 24.7% from the end	Kevin Indig, 2026
14.4% of ChatGPT answers run additional searches	~1.6 sub-queries on average; most answers do without fan-out	Ahrefs
12% of URLs cited by AI are in Google's top 10 for the same query	A classic top ranking doesn't guarantee citation, and vice versa	Ahrefs
40–60% of cited domains change within a month	70–90% — over six months	Profound, 2025
133 vs 11 Google reviews	For businesses AI recommended vs ignored; correlation	Insites
+14% conversions from AI Max	Google's internal 2025 data, at a similar CPA/ROAS	Google
~1 in 4 Ukrainians use AI when shopping	The share is growing but still a minority	Kantar Ukraine
41% of respondents bought on AI advice; **48.4%** trust the advice	Survey n=3,635, non-representative sample — don't generalise to everyone	Ukrainian agency study, 2026
×5 AI referrals to a large marketplace in 2025	Yet about 1% of all traffic: fast growth from a small base	Prom.ua

How to use the numbers

The AI channel's growth is real, but for most businesses it's still a small share of traffic with high conversion. Hence the priority: don't drop SEO and ads for GEO — make the site worth citing and recommending; it's the same work.

OFTEN SAID, NEVER PROVEN

Myths and where sources disagree

Claim	What's actually true
"Add llms.txt and Google will start citing you" UNPROVEN	Google Search doesn't use it (p. 14)
"You need special AI markup" UNPROVEN	There is no separate markup for generative features
"You need at least 20 reviews" UNPROVEN	No threshold found; only a correlation "more reviews — recommended more often" (p. 17)
"This makes you 2.5× more likely to appear in AI" UNPROVEN	Multipliers without a method are marketing, not data
"27% of sub-queries repeat" UNPROVEN	In an open test, two identical runs 8 minutes apart shared not a single sub-query
"GEO is 60–70% regular SEO" UNPROVEN	The share hasn't been measured. The overlap is large (p. 14), but there are differences (p. 16)

Where sources disagree — and what we do

Question	Range of opinions	Our recommendation
Pages for sub-queries	From "a page for every sub-query" to "one page per topic"	A strong page + sub-questions as H2/FAQ sections. A separate page only if the sub-question has its own intent and audience
Source stability	From "96.8% unchanged week to week" to "74% change weekly"	There's a core and a tail: review sources monthly (p. 16)
Length and structure	From "short blocks for AI" to "length doesn't matter"	No artificial splitting; answer first, paragraphs that work outside the page
Mentions or links	From "mentions matter more than links" to "classic SEO is what counts"	Both: backlinks for search, genuine mentions for AI recommendations

THE MOST EXPENSIVE ONES FIRST

Common mistakes

01 **Counting mentions only**

A mention without a recommendation or a lead isn't a result. Measure three levels (p. 8).

02 **Drawing conclusions from one run**

AI answers change from run to run. A prompt set, several runs, the trend.

03 **Rewriting copy when bots can't see the page**

Access and indexing first (p. 15).

04 **Generating a page for every sub-query**

For Google that's scaled content spam (p. 14).

05 **Paying for llms.txt and "AI markup"**

For Google Search it doesn't work.

06 **Hiding prices and terms**

AI will take the price from a directory or a competitor — and the link goes there (p. 12).

07 **Writing "for everyone"**

AI recommends "for whom". Without a segment you get recommended to the wrong customer.

08 **Changing the date without new content**

Freshness means new data, not a new date (p. 13).

09 **Different company descriptions on different platforms**

One positioning sentence everywhere (p. 17).

10 **Buying reviews and mentions**

Google considers inauthentic signals not as helpful, and customers spot them.

11 **Turning on AI Max without a site audit**

Outdated prices and services will end up in ads (p. 18).

12 **Optimising ads for "form submitted"**

Send qualified leads and deals back from the CRM (p. 19).

Working rhythm

Weekly: in the first month of AI Max — text, search terms, final URLs. **Monthly:** prompt set, Search Console, the AI channel in GA4, CRM, the list of cited domains. **Quarterly:** update key pages, the question map, reviews and directories.

PRINT AND FILL IN EVERY MONTH

Worksheets

A · Prompt set run date: _____

Buyer question	AI	Are you there? Recommended?	Recommended for whom	Strengths / weaknesses	Cited
Example: who runs Google Ads for an auto-parts online store	ChatGPT	mentioned, not recommended	“for small budgets”	+ case studies / – no prices	direct Reddi

B · Weekly AI Max review (first month)

Week	Generated text: what to remove	New search terms: what to exclude	Final URLs: where not to send	Decision
1				
2				
3				
4				

C · Question map and paragraph test

Buyer sub-question	URL and section with the answer	Paragraph passes the test? (p. 10)	What to do

AI visibility checklist

- [ ] AI bots not blocked in robots.txt or CDN
- [ ] Key pages indexed, snippets allowed
- [ ] Question map for 2–3 main services
- [ ] Sub-questions as H2 sections, not separate pages
- [ ] Answer first, in the top third of the page
- [ ] Key paragraphs pass the copy test
- [ ] Prices or “from”, case studies, use cases, comparisons
- [ ] Author pages with profiles
- [ ] Updated date changes only with new content
- [ ] One company description everywhere
- [ ] 3–5 niche directories, detailed reviews
- [ ] Site governance audit before AI Max
- [ ] Qualified leads and deals from CRM in Google Ads
- [ ] Monthly prompt set
- [ ] Search Console, AI channel in GA4, CRM field
- [ ] Cited domains reviewed monthly

Want to know what AI says about your business?

ConvertLab360 runs your site, Google and Meta ads and analytics as one system. We’ll run your key buyer questions through ChatGPT, Gemini and AI Mode for free, check your site against this playbook and show you the 3–5 most important gaps.

Get a free audit → convertlab360.com

Get in touch

WHATSAPP	PHONE	TELEGRAM	EMAIL
+380 67 477 5880	+380 67 477 5880	@gg_fb_ads	hello@convertlab360.com

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