Mantas Auk

A DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE

The AI Search Playbook

How to get your business named when your customers ask ChatGPT and Google's AI who to hire. Seven steps your own team can start this week.

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WHY THIS MATTERS

Your customers now ask AI who to hire

A customer used to type two words into Google and get a list of ten websites. Now they ask a full question and get an answer with two or three company names in it. If your name is not one of them, you are not in the conversation.

2.5B+
people a month see AI answers at the top of Google (AI Overviews)

1B+
people a month use Google as a chat (AI Mode)

3×
longer: the average question in AI Mode, compared with a normal search

Source: Google, 2026.

How AI decides which companies to name

AI works from what it can read. It looks in three places:

1. **Your website.** Does it answer the questions customers ask, with facts AI can repeat?
2. **Other websites.** Do trusted websites in your city and industry mention you and link to you?
3. **Reviews and listings.** Do your Google profile, reviews and directory listings say the same thing about you?

The rule behind this whole playbook: AI can't recommend what it can't read. So write it down: your answers, your facts, your proof.

The seven steps

1. Collect the 25 questions customers ask before they buy
2. Answer each big question on its own page
3. Replace adjectives with facts
4. Show real people
5. Ask every customer for a review
6. Get named on websites your customers trust
7. Count the result every month

Old SEO is not dead. It is the foundation. This playbook is the next floor of the same house.

START HERE · 10 MINUTES

First, see what AI says today

Before you change anything, find out where you stand. All you need is your phone.

1. Open **ChatGPT** or **Google** (tap "AI Mode").
2. Ask a question the way a customer would ask it, before they know your name.
3. Write down which companies it names, and what it says about each one.
4. Do it for five different questions.

ONE RULE

Never type your company's name. If you ask "Is Smith Roofing good?", AI will talk about Smith Roofing, and you learn nothing. A real customer does not know your name yet. Ask the way they ask.

Questions that work

- *"I need a commercial contractor in Fort Worth to build out a restaurant. Who should I call, and why?"*
- *"Who is the best property manager in Plano for one rental house, and what do they charge?"*
- *"My car has hail damage. Which dent repair shops near Dallas work with insurance?"*

Your score sheet

THE QUESTION I ASKED	COMPANIES AI NAMED	WERE WE NAMED?

How to read it. Named in 0 of 5: AI does not know you yet, and most companies start here. The names it gave instead are your real competitors in AI. Look at what it says about them: those are the facts it found on their websites.

1 Collect the 25 questions

This step costs nothing and matters most. The list you make here is your content plan for the next year.

Ask your sales people, your front desk and your technicians one thing: **what do customers ask before they buy?** Not what you want to tell them. What they really ask on the first call. One meeting is enough to collect twenty-five.

Six kinds of questions customers ask

KIND	A REAL EXAMPLE
Price	"*What does a property manager charge for one rental house?*"
Time	"*How long does a restaurant build-out take from lease to opening?*"
Risk	"*Will insurance pay for hail damage, and what does it cost without insurance?*"
Rules	"*Do I need a permit for a new fence in Highland Park?*"
Choosing	"*Should I repair or replace? What should I ask before I hire someone?*"
Who	"*Who is the best [your service] in [your city] for [my situation]?*"

Look at the list. **Price. Time. Risk. Rules.** Nobody asks: "Who has excellence and integrity?"

Where to find them

- [ ] Your sales team: the first five questions on every call
- [ ] Emails and website forms from the last three months
- [ ] Your Google Business Profile: the questions people post there
- [ ] Google itself: type your service and read "People also ask"
- [ ] Ask ChatGPT: "What do people ask before hiring a [your service] in [your city]?"

Then pick your top three

Mark the three questions that matter most for your sales: the ones asked by the customers you most want. You will answer those first, in Step 2.

2 Answer each big question on its own page

A big question deserves its own page on your website. Small, related questions can share one good page.

The page recipe

1. **The title is the question**, in the customer's words, with your city.
2. **The answer comes first.** Two or three sentences at the top. A reader who stops there got the answer.
3. **Real numbers.** A price range, a number of days, a count. Say what changes it.
4. **A table or a list of steps.** Options side by side, or what happens in what order.
5. **A real person.** Who wrote it or checked it, with their role.
6. **One next step.** One button: call, book, or get a quote.
7. **Questions people ask next**, each with a short answer.



A real page from a dent repair shop, simplified.

THE USUAL BLOG POST

- ✗ 1,400 words, the answer in paragraph nine
- ✗ No price, "it depends"
- ✗ No author
- ✗ Nothing to do next

A PAGE AI CAN USE

- ✓ The answer in the first three lines
- ✓ A real range and what changes it
- ✓ A named person
- ✓ One clear next step

How fast? One useful page a week is plenty. One real answer is worth more than fifty pages nobody asked for.

3 Replace adjectives with facts

ADJECTIVES

"Serving the DFW area with excellence and integrity. Your satisfaction is our priority."

True of every company. It tells a customer, and AI, nothing.

FACTS

"Licensed in 29 states. In business since 2011. We built restaurants for Five Guys, Sonic and Taco Cabana."

Every sentence can be checked, and AI can repeat it.

Count the facts on your home page

Open your home page tonight and tick what a stranger can find in one minute:

- [ ] The year you started
- [ ] Licenses and certifications, with numbers
- [ ] How many projects or customers
- [ ] The cities and areas you serve, by name
- [ ] Brands or kinds of clients you worked for
- [ ] Prices, or honest price ranges
- [ ] How long the work takes
- [ ] Your warranty or guarantee, in plain words
- [ ] Your Google rating and number of reviews
- [ ] Photos of your own work, with captions

If you ticked fewer than five, you found your first task. The facts exist. Today they live in the owner's head.

4 Show real people

Customers hire people, and AI looks for a real person behind the words.

- [ ] An About page with the owner's name, photo and story
- [ ] Team members with their roles, licenses and years of experience
- [ ] A name on every guide: who wrote it or who checked it
- [ ] Your real address, phone and hours, the same everywhere on the internet

5 Ask every customer for a review

- [ ] **Ask everyone**, not only the happy ones. Google's rules require it, and a mix of real reviews is trusted more.
- [ ] **Ask the same day** the job is done, by text, with the direct link to your Google review page.
- [ ] **Answer every review**, good or bad, within a few days. Use the customer's words about the job.

6 Get named on websites your customers trust

What is a backlink? Another website that links to yours. To Google it is a vote. To AI it is proof: when other websites write about you, AI has something to repeat.

A GOOD LINK

Comes from a real website with real readers that fits your business: your city, your industry, your partners.

A BAD LINK

Comes from a website that exists only to sell links. One company paid for ten months and got a fashion blog, a "general knowledge" blog and a website with escort ads.

Ten places to get a good link, free

- [ ] Your trade association's member page
- [ ] Your chamber of commerce
- [ ] Suppliers: ask to be listed as a dealer or installer
- [ ] Partners: a story about a project you did together
- [ ] Customers who are businesses: a short case study on their site
- [ ] Local news: a project, an opening, an award
- [ ] Trade magazines and industry websites
- [ ] Charities and events you sponsor
- [ ] Schools and alumni pages
- [ ] Business groups you belong to (BNI, Vistage, Rotary)

For most companies this adds up to **10 to 20 links**. It is a strong start, and then the list runs out. The companies AI names today keep adding new ones every month.

When you hire an agency for links, ask: Where will we appear? Why does that website make sense for our business? Will I see every link? If you do not get clear answers, do not pay.

7 Count the result every month

One good screenshot is not a measurement. The same questions, counted the same way every month, is.

WHAT TO COUNT	HOW
AI names you	Ask the same 25 questions every month, without your name. Write it as a count: "named in 6 of 25".
Who it names instead	Keep the list of competitors AI names, and what it says about them.
Google's AI shows your site	Google Search Console → Performance → **Generative AI**. It counts how often Google's AI answers showed your website. Free.
Clicks from Google	Search Console → Performance. Compare with the month before.
New customers	Ask every new caller one thing: **"How did you find us?"** Write the answer down.

Can AI read your website? Ask your web person.

- [ ] "Can ChatGPT and Google's AI read our website?" Some security settings block AI crawlers by mistake.
- [ ] Is the important text real text on the page, not only inside images or PDF files?
- [ ] Does the site load fast and work on a phone?
- [ ] Are our name, address and phone exactly the same on the website, Google and every directory?

Five mistakes to avoid

- ✕ **Piles of pages written by AI.** Nobody asked for them. One useful answer beats fifty empty pages.
- ✕ **Blocking AI by mistake.** A security setting can hide your whole website.
- ✕ **One screenshot as proof.** Ask for the same questions, counted every month.
- ✕ **Believing a guarantee.** Nobody controls what AI answers. A good partner promises the work and the monthly count.
- ✕ **Leaving it all to marketing.** The facts customers ask about are with sales, technicians and finance.

YOUR PLAN

Start this week

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Ask your team for the 25 questions
- [ ] Ask AI five of them, without your name
- [ ] Pick the three that matter most for sales
- [ ] Count the facts on your home page

EVERY MONTH

- [ ] Publish answers to new questions, one a week
- [ ] Ask every customer for a review
- [ ] Add one or two good links
- [ ] Run the same 25 questions and count

What it looks like when it works

0 → 29

A commercial contractor: named in 0 of 70 buyer questions in October, 29 of 70 in ChatGPT in November. Three new clients that month said they found him through ChatGPT.

38 → 295

A dent repair shop: clicks from Google Search per month, August to October, after a new website with pages that answer customer questions. No ads.

77,400

An online store: times Google's AI answers showed the website in three months. It was close to zero in August.

Client results from 2026, shared without names. Sources: Google Search Console and monthly AI tests.

QUESTIONS? LET'S TALK

Book 30 minutes with me. It is free.

Bring your questions, or ask for a free AI check: we ask AI 25 questions your customers would ask and show you who it names today.

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