

# THE GEO PLAYBOOK

**COVER  
PAGE**

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# **How to Get Recommended by ChatGPT Before Your Competitors Do**

The Small Business Guide to Generative Engine Optimization

By Matt LaClear Cofounder, Digital Wins

**From the  
team  
behind  
13,277+  
successful  
campaigns**

# TITLE PAGE

**THE GEO PLAYBOOK** How to Get Recommended by ChatGPT Before Your Competitors Do

By **Matt LaClear** Cofounder, Digital Wins

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# Pioneers of GEO

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

# CONTENTS

Introduction: The Shift Nobody's Talking About . . . . .	3
Chapter 1: How Search Changed While You Weren't Looking . . . . .	5
Chapter 2: What is GEO? (And Why SEO Alone Won't Save You) . . .	9
Chapter 3: How AI Decides Who to Recommend . . . . .	13
Chapter 4: The Four Pillars of GEO . . . . .	17
Chapter 5: The 7 Mistakes Keeping You Invisible to AI . . . . .	25
Chapter 6: Your 30-Day GEO Quick Start Plan . . . . .	29
Chapter 7: What Happens Next . . . . .	33
Appendix: The Complete GEO Audit Checklist . . . . .	35

# INTRODUCTION

## The Shift Nobody's Talking About

What if I told you that ranking #1 on Google might not matter in two years?

I know. That sounds insane. You've spent years — maybe decades — building your SEO. You've invested thousands of dollars. You've watched your rankings climb. You've celebrated hitting page one.

And I'm telling you it might not matter soon.

Here's why.

Right now, as you read this, millions of people have stopped scrolling through Google's search results. They don't click the blue links anymore. They don't compare three websites to find the best option.

Instead, they open ChatGPT. They ask Perplexity. They read the AI Overview at the top of Google — and never scroll past it.

They ask: "Who's the best personal injury lawyer in Las Vegas?"

And AI gives them names. Specific businesses. Direct recommendations.

If your business isn't one of those names, you might as well not exist.

This isn't a prediction about the future. This is happening right now, today, while most business owners are completely unaware.

I wrote this ebook because I've watched this shift happen in real-time. At Digital Wins, we've run over 13,277 marketing campaigns since 2009. We've seen every Google algorithm update, every SEO trend, every "next big thing" in digital marketing.

And I'm telling you: this is different.

This isn't a tweak to how search works. It's a fundamental reimagining of how people find and choose businesses. It's the biggest shift since Google itself.

The businesses that understand this shift — and adapt to it — will thrive. They'll capture leads their competitors don't even know exist. They'll get phone calls from customers who never visited their website.

The businesses that ignore it will slowly fade. They'll keep "doing SEO" while wondering why their traffic is declining. They'll blame the algorithm. They'll blame the economy. They'll never realize that the game changed while they weren't looking.

# What You'll Learn in This Ebook:

By the time you finish reading, you'll understand:

- How AI decides which businesses to recommend (and which to ignore)
- The critical difference between ranking and getting recommended
- The Four Pillars of GEO — a practical framework you can implement immediately
- The 7 mistakes keeping most businesses invisible to AI
- A 30-day quick start plan to begin your GEO transformation

# Who This Is For:

This ebook is for small business owners who are tired of the SEO hamster wheel. It's for local service providers — lawyers, doctors, dentists, contractors, agencies — who depend on a steady stream of new clients. It's for professional services firms who want higher-quality leads. It's for anyone who's invested heavily in SEO but sees diminishing returns.

If you've ever wondered why your rankings don't translate into more business, this ebook will show you why — and what to do about it.

# A Note on Timing:

I want to be direct with you: the window of opportunity is now.

The businesses that move first will own the AI recommendations in their industry. They'll establish themselves as the trusted, go-to providers before their competitors even realize what's happening.

By the time GEO becomes common knowledge — by the time everyone is doing it — the advantage will be gone.

You're reading this ebook before most of your competitors even know GEO exists. That's an advantage. Don't waste it.

Let's begin.

# CHAPTER 1

## How Search Changed While You Weren't Looking

For 25 years, search worked the same way.

Someone had a question. They went to Google. They typed in some keywords. Google showed them a list of ten blue links. They clicked one. Maybe two. Maybe they went back and clicked a third.

Eventually, they found what they were looking for. Or they gave up.

The entire SEO industry was built around this model. Get your website to appear in those ten blue links — ideally as close to the top as possible. The higher you ranked, the more clicks you got. The more clicks, the more leads. The more leads, the more revenue.

It was simple. It was predictable. It worked.

# Here's the old model:

A potential customer searches Google for "best plumber near me." Google shows ten results. The customer clicks the first result. They browse the website. Maybe they call. Maybe they compare a few options first.

Every business on page one has a chance. The business in position one gets the most clicks. Position two gets fewer. And so on down the page.

SEO was a competition to climb that ladder. Build more backlinks. Optimize more pages. Create more content. Outwork your competitors and outrank them.

For 25 years, this worked.

# But something changed.

Today, that same customer doesn't scroll through ten results. They open ChatGPT and type: "I need a good plumber in Chicago. Who should I call?"

And ChatGPT responds:

*"Based on reviews and reputation, here are some highly-rated plumbers in Chicago: ABC Plumbing is known for their fast response times and transparent pricing. XYZ Plumbing has been serving the Chicago area for over 30 years and specializes in emergency repairs. 123 Plumbing offers competitive rates and has excellent customer service ratings..."*

No ten blue links. No clicking through websites. No comparison shopping.

The customer reads the recommendation, picks up the phone, and calls ABC Plumbing.

ABC Plumbing just got a lead. They didn't "rank" for anything. They got *recommended*.

Meanwhile, the plumber who spent years climbing to position one on Google? The customer never saw them. Never visited their website. Never knew they existed.

That plumber is still "winning" at SEO. But they're losing the game that actually matters.

# **This isn't a small shift. Look at the numbers:**

ChatGPT has over 200 million weekly active users. That's not a typo. Two hundred million people using AI to search, ask questions, and get recommendations every single week.

Perplexity — an AI-native search engine most people haven't heard of — is one of the fastest-growing platforms on the internet.

Google itself has added AI Overviews to the top of 80% or more of search results. These AI-generated answers appear above the traditional results. Many users read the AI answer and never scroll down.

Research shows that 40% of Gen Z now prefers TikTok or AI over Google for search. They've never known a world where you scroll through ten blue links. To them, that's already outdated.

# Let me show you what this looks like in practice.

Go to ChatGPT right now. Ask: "Who's the best personal injury lawyer in Las Vegas?"

I'll wait.

What did you see? ChatGPT probably gave you 3-5 specific names. It explained why each one was recommended. It might have mentioned their specialties, their years of experience, their reputation.

It gave you a shortlist. It did the vetting for you.

Now here's the critical question: Was your business on that list?

If you're a personal injury lawyer in Las Vegas, and you weren't named in that response, you just lost a potential client. Not because your website is bad. Not because your SEO is weak. But because AI didn't know you existed — or didn't trust you enough to recommend you.

# This is the fundamental shift:

Google ranks pages. AI recommends businesses.

These are not the same thing.

You can have the best-optimized website in your industry. You can rank #1 for every keyword you care about. You can have a beautiful site with perfect technical SEO.

And AI can still completely ignore you.

Why? Because AI isn't looking at your website the way Google does. AI is trying to answer a question. It's trying to give a helpful recommendation. It's looking for signals that you're a real, trustworthy, notable business — not just a well-optimized web page.

# What this means for your business:

Your SEO investment isn't wasted. The work you've done still matters. But it's no longer enough.

SEO gets you ranked on Google. That still has value. But if you want to capture the growing number of customers who ask AI for recommendations — and that number is growing every single day — you need something more.

You need GEO.

# CHAPTER 2

## **What is GEO? (And Why SEO Alone Won't Save You)**

GEO stands for Generative Engine Optimization.

It's the practice of optimizing your business to be recommended by AI systems — not just ranked by search engines.

If SEO is about winning clicks, GEO is about winning mentions. If SEO is about ranking pages, GEO is about building the kind of authority and presence that makes AI confident enough to recommend you by name.

# The platforms that matter:

When we talk about GEO, we're talking about optimization for:

**ChatGPT** — OpenAI's AI assistant. The dominant player. Over 200 million weekly users asking questions, seeking recommendations, and making decisions based on what ChatGPT tells them.

**Perplexity** — An AI-native search engine that's growing fast. It provides direct answers with sources, and it's becoming many people's default way to search.

**Google AI Overviews** — Google's own AI answers that appear at the top of search results. Even if you're "doing SEO," your customers might read the AI Overview and never scroll down to your result.

**Bing Copilot** — Microsoft's AI integration into Bing search. Smaller market share than Google, but millions of users.

**And whatever comes next** — The AI landscape is evolving rapidly. New players will emerge. The core principles of GEO will apply to all of them.

# Why SEO tactics don't automatically translate to GEO:

If you've been doing SEO for years, you've developed certain instincts. You know to include keywords in your titles. You know to build backlinks. You know to optimize your meta descriptions.

Here's the problem: many of these tactics don't help with GEO. Some of them actively hurt.

# Keyword stuffing doesn't work.

AI is trained on natural language. It's designed to understand how humans actually communicate. When your content is stuffed with awkward keyword phrases — “If you're looking for best plumber Chicago IL, our best plumber Chicago services are the best plumber option for Chicago residents” — AI recognizes that as low-quality content.

Worse, it makes AI less likely to cite you as a source. AI wants to recommend businesses that communicate clearly and professionally, not ones that sound like they're trying to game an algorithm.

# Backlink quantity matters less than you think.

In traditional SEO, more backlinks generally meant more authority. The race was to build as many links as possible.

For GEO, it's not about how many sites link to you. It's about which sites mention you and in what context. One genuine mention in a respected industry publication carries more weight than a hundred links from random blogs and directories.

AI is looking for signals that you're a notable, trustworthy business. A mention in the local newspaper or a feature on an industry podcast sends that signal. A hundred links from low-quality directories doesn't.

# Meta tags are largely irrelevant.

Your carefully crafted meta descriptions? AI doesn't read them. Not in the way Google does.

AI is reading your actual content. It's looking at what you say on the page, how you say it, and whether it directly answers the questions people are asking. Your meta description might help you get clicks from Google, but it won't help you get recommended by ChatGPT.

# Thin content at scale backfires.

A common SEO tactic is to publish a high volume of content — sometimes hundreds of pages — to capture a wide range of keywords. More pages, more opportunities to rank.

But for GEO, this strategy often backfires. If you have 500 thin, low-quality pages, you're diluting your authority. AI sees a bunch of mediocre content and concludes that you're not a particularly authoritative source.

It's better to have 50 genuinely excellent, comprehensive pages than 500 forgettable ones.

# The entity problem:

Here's something that surprises most business owners: AI doesn't just see your website. It sees — or doesn't see — your business as an entity.

An "entity" in this context means a distinct, recognizable thing that exists in the world. A person. A place. A company. Something that has an identity beyond just a web address.

Google has long used entity recognition. That's why some businesses have a "Knowledge Panel" — that box that appears on the right side of search results with your business name, address, hours, and photos. Google has recognized you as an entity, not just a website.

AI systems take this even further. They want to know:

- Is this a real business?
- How long have they been around?
- What do other sources say about them?
- Are they consistently described across the internet?
- Are they notable enough to be mentioned by authoritative sources?

If AI can't clearly identify you as a distinct business entity — if your information is inconsistent, if you're not mentioned by other sources, if you're essentially invisible outside your own website — then AI has no basis for recommending you.

This is why a business can rank well on Google but be completely absent from AI recommendations. Google is ranking your web page. AI is trying to evaluate your business. These are different processes with different signals.

# The core insight:

SEO gets you ranked. GEO gets you recommended.

You need both. But if you're only doing SEO — if you're only thinking about Google rankings and keyword optimization — you're playing yesterday's game.

The businesses winning tomorrow are the ones building their AI presence today.

# CHAPTER 3

## How AI Decides Who to Recommend

When someone asks ChatGPT “Who's the best divorce lawyer in Miami?” — what happens next?

The AI doesn't have a list of lawyers sitting in a database waiting to be queried. It doesn't rank websites the way Google does. It doesn't look at backlinks or keyword density.

Instead, it draws on everything it was trained on — and increasingly, real-time data from the web — to construct an answer. It's trying to be helpful. It's trying to give a good recommendation.

So how does it decide who to recommend?

After years of studying AI responses and reverse-engineering what makes businesses appear in recommendations, we've identified five key factors.

# **FACTOR 1: Entity Recognition**

## **Does AI know you're a real business?**

Before AI can recommend you, it has to know you exist. Not just as a website, but as a legitimate business entity.

Entity recognition means AI can identify your business as a distinct thing in the world — with a name, a location, services, and an identity that's consistent across multiple sources.

# What builds entity recognition:

Your **Google Business Profile** is foundational. This is often the first place AI looks to verify that you're a real, legitimate business. A complete, well-maintained profile sends strong entity signals.

**Consistent NAP** (Name, Address, Phone) across all directories matters enormously. If you're "Smith Law Firm" on Google, "Smith Law Group" on Yelp, and "Smith & Associates" on LinkedIn, AI gets confused. Is this one business or three?

**Schema markup** on your website helps AI understand what you are. LocalBusiness schema, Organization schema, Person schema for key team members — these structured data elements help AI connect the dots.

**Mentions in authoritative sources** validate that you're notable. When newspapers, industry publications, or other trusted sources mention your business, AI takes notice.

**A clear About page** on your website helps too. Who are you? How long have you been in business? What's your story? AI reads this.

**Test it yourself:** Go to ChatGPT and search for your exact business name. Does it know who you are? Does it get the details right? Or does it draw a blank?

# FACTOR 2: Mention Frequency

## How often is your business referenced across the web?

AI learns from patterns. If your business is rarely mentioned anywhere outside your own website, AI has very little data to work with.

Think of it like this: if someone asked you to recommend a good restaurant in a city you've never visited, you'd struggle. You'd have no frame of reference. But if you'd read about that city's food scene — if you'd seen certain restaurants mentioned again and again in articles, reviews, and recommendations — you'd feel confident naming a few.

AI works the same way. The more often your business is mentioned in quality contexts, the more “real” and “notable” you become in AI's understanding.

# What increases mention frequency:

**PR coverage and news mentions** are powerful. An article in your local newspaper. A feature on a news website. A story about your industry that quotes you.

**Guest posts on industry sites** get your name in front of new audiences and new sources.

**Podcast appearances** result in show notes, episode descriptions, and sometimes transcripts — all of which mention you.

**Awards and “best of” lists** are explicit endorsements that AI weighs heavily.

**Customer reviews across multiple platforms** create a consistent stream of mentions.

**Partner and vendor mentions** add up. If the businesses you work with mention you on their websites, that's another data point.

**The pattern is clear:** The more places you're genuinely, legitimately mentioned, the more AI trusts that you're a real, relevant business worth recommending.

# **FACTOR 3: Source Authority**

## **Are trusted sources talking about you?**

Not all mentions are equal. A mention in Forbes carries 100 times the weight of a mention on a random blog. A citation in an academic paper matters more than a comment on a forum.

AI weighs the authority of the sources that mention you. If you're only mentioned on low-authority sites — or worse, only on your own website — AI has little reason to trust you.

# High-authority sources include:

Major news outlets — The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, local newspapers, broadcast news websites.

Industry publications — Trade journals, professional association websites, respected industry blogs.

Government and .edu sites — Mentions on university websites, government resources, or official industry registries.

Wikipedia — Being mentioned (not just having your own page, but being referenced in relevant articles) is a strong authority signal.

Established industry directories — Being listed in the most respected directories for your profession.

# Lower-authority sources (still help, but less):

Small blogs with little traffic.

Low-quality directories and aggregators.

Self-published press releases on PR distribution sites.

Social media posts (unless from authoritative accounts).

**The implication is clear:** Pursue quality over quantity. One genuine feature in a respected publication does more for your AI visibility than a hundred low-value mentions.

# **FACTOR 4: Answer Clarity**

## **Does your content directly answer questions?**

AI's job is to answer questions. When someone asks "How long do I have to file a personal injury claim in California?" — AI needs to find content that answers that specific question.

If your content doesn't clearly answer questions, AI has nothing to cite. It might know you exist. It might recognize you as a legitimate business. But if your website doesn't provide the answers AI is looking for, you won't be recommended.

# Content that gets cited:

Content with **direct answers in the first paragraph**. Don't bury the answer under 500 words of introduction. Get to the point.

Content with **clear structure**. Question as a heading. Answer immediately following. Supporting details below.

Content with **lists and step-by-step formats**. AI loves structured content that's easy to extract and summarize.

Content with **specific facts and data points**. Statistics. Timeframes. Concrete numbers.

Content with **FAQ sections**. Questions phrased the way real people ask them, with direct answers.

# Content that gets ignored:

Vague, fluffy marketing copy that talks around the topic without saying anything concrete.

Keyword-stuffed pages that don't actually answer any questions.

Content that buries the answer under paragraphs of unnecessary preamble.

Pages that talk about a topic without taking a clear position or providing actionable information.

**The standard is simple:** Write like you're answering a specific question from a specific person. Because that's exactly what AI is trying to do.

# **FACTOR 5: Consistency**

**Is your business information the same everywhere?**

If your name, address, or phone number varies across the web, AI gets confused about whether these are all the same business.

Inconsistency creates uncertainty. And when AI is uncertain, it doesn't recommend.

# **The consistency checklist:**

- Exact same business name everywhere (including "LLC" or "Inc." if you use it anywhere)
- Exact same address format everywhere
- Same phone number on every listing
- Same business categories and descriptions
- Same hours of operation

# Common inconsistencies that hurt:

"Matt's Plumbing" vs "Matt's Plumbing LLC" vs "Matts Plumbing"

"123 Main St" vs "123 Main Street" vs "123 Main St, Suite 100"

Different phone numbers on your website vs Google vs Yelp

Different hours listed on different platforms

**The fix is tedious but essential:** Audit every single place your business appears online. Make sure the information is identical. This isn't glamorous work, but it's foundational.

# What doesn't matter as much as you think:

It's worth noting what doesn't drive AI recommendations:

- Keyword density in your content
- Domain age
- Number of pages on your website
- Exact-match keywords in your URL
- The raw number of backlinks (quality matters more)
- Your current Google ranking

You can rank #1 on Google and be invisible to AI. These are different systems with different signals.

# CHAPTER 4

## The Four Pillars of GEO

At Digital Wins, we've developed a GEO framework built on four pillars. This isn't theoretical. It's refined from 13,277 campaigns and years of observing how AI systems evaluate and recommend businesses.

These four pillars work together. Skip one, and the others are less effective. Implement all four, and you build a foundation that makes AI confident to recommend you.

# **PILLAR 1:**

# **AI**

# **Visibility**

# **Audit**

**First, find out where you stand.**

Before you can improve your AI visibility, you need to know your current baseline. Most business owners assume they're doing fine — and are shocked when they discover AI has no idea they exist.

# Your DIY Audit — Do This Today:

Open ChatGPT in a new conversation. Ask these five questions, inserting your own business and location:

1. "Who is the best [your service] in [your city]?"
2. "What companies provide [your service] in [your city]?"
3. "Can you recommend a [your service] near [your location]?"
4. "[Your exact business name] — what do you know about them?"
5. "What are the top-rated [your industry] businesses in [your state]?"

Write down exactly what ChatGPT says in response to each question.

**Evaluate  
the  
responses:**

**Green  
flags  
(you're  
doing  
something  
right):**

- You're mentioned by name
- The information about you is accurate
- You're positioned positively

# **Red flags (you have work to do):**

- You're not mentioned at all
- AI confuses you with another business
- The information is outdated or wrong
- Your competitors are recommended instead of you

# Don't stop with ChatGPT:

Run the same queries in:

**Perplexity** (perplexity.ai) — This AI search engine often gives different results than ChatGPT. You might appear in one but not the other.

**Bing Copilot** — Microsoft's AI search. Worth checking, especially for B2B audiences.

**Google** — Look at the AI Overviews that appear at the top of search results. Are you mentioned there?

**Document everything.** Screenshot the responses. Record the date. This is your baseline. You'll measure future progress against it.

# What the audit tells you:

If you're appearing consistently across AI platforms with accurate, positive information — congratulations. You're ahead of most businesses. Focus on strengthening and defending your position.

If you're absent, confused with others, or portrayed inaccurately — you now know the problem. The following pillars will help you fix it.

# **PILLAR 2:**

# **Entity**

# **Authority**

# **Building**

**Make AI understand you're a real, trustworthy business.**

AI needs to recognize your business as a distinct entity before it can recommend you. This pillar is about building that foundation.

# Priority 1: Google Business Profile

Your GBP is the single most important asset for local entity recognition. Treat it accordingly.

**Complete every field.** Don't leave anything blank. Business description. Services. Products. Attributes. Special hours. Everything.

**Add photos.** A minimum of 10 photos. Interior. Exterior. Team members. Products or services in action. Update them regularly.

**Post weekly updates.** Google Business Posts show AI that you're an active, current business. Share news, offers, tips, or behind-the-scenes content.

**Respond to every review.** Within 24 hours if possible. Thank positive reviewers. Address negative reviews professionally. This engagement signals that you're actively managing your presence.

**Use the Q&A feature.** Seed your own questions if needed. "Do you offer free consultations?" "What areas do you serve?" Answer them thoroughly.

**Add all services and products.** Be comprehensive. The more detail, the more signals you provide.

**Keep hours accurate.** Holiday hours. Special closures. Nothing erodes trust faster than wrong hours.

# Priority 2: Directory Consistency

Claim your business on the top 20 directories and ensure your information is identical across all of them.

# The essential directories:

1. Google Business Profile
2. Bing Places
3. Apple Maps
4. Yelp
5. Facebook Business
6. LinkedIn Company Page
7. Better Business Bureau
8. Your industry-specific directories (Avvo for lawyers, Healthgrades for doctors, HomeAdvisor for contractors, etc.)
9. Local chamber of commerce
10. Yellow Pages / YP.com
11. Angi (formerly Angie's List)
12. Thumbtack
13. Nextdoor Business
14. Manta
15. Foursquare
16. MapQuest
17. Superpages
18. CitySearch
19. Local news/media business directories
20. State/local government business registries

For each directory:

- Claim the listing if you haven't already
- Verify that your NAP is exactly consistent with everywhere else
- Complete all available fields
- Add photos where possible

# Priority 3: Schema Markup

Schema markup is structured data you add to your website that helps AI understand what you are.

At minimum, add:

**LocalBusiness schema** (or a more specific type like LegalService, MedicalBusiness, Plumber, etc.) — Include your name, address, phone, hours, description, geo-coordinates, and price range.

**Organization schema** — For your business as a whole.

**Person schema** — For key team members, especially if they have personal authority in your industry.

**FAQPage schema** — If you have FAQ content, mark it up so AI can easily extract question-answer pairs.

**Review/AggregateRating schema** — If you display reviews on your website.

If you're not technical, your web developer can implement this. If you're using WordPress, plugins like Yoast or RankMath can help.

# Priority 4: External Mentions

You can't just tell AI you're authoritative. Other sources have to say it too.

**Pursue genuine PR.** Reach out to local journalists. Offer yourself as an expert source. Comment on industry news. Celebrate company milestones with press releases to real outlets (not just PR distribution sites).

**Write guest articles.** Identify industry publications, local business blogs, and partner websites that accept contributed content. Write something genuinely valuable. Include your byline and business mention.

**Appear on podcasts.** Many industry podcasts are looking for guests. Each appearance generates show notes and mentions that AI can find.

**Speak at events.** Conferences, local business events, webinars, and workshops all generate mentions when they list speakers and publish recaps.

**Submit for awards.** "Best of" lists, industry awards, and local business awards all create authoritative mentions.

**Build strategic partnerships.** When partners, vendors, or complementary businesses mention you on their sites, it adds to your mention footprint.

# **PILLAR 3: Answer-Optimized Content**

**Create content AI wants to cite.**

AI is answering questions. If your content doesn't clearly answer questions, AI has nothing to work with.

This pillar is about restructuring your content so it becomes a source AI can draw from.

# The Question-Answer-Proof Framework:

Every piece of content should follow this structure:

**QUESTION:** State the question clearly — ideally as a heading.

**ANSWER:** Give the direct answer in 1-2 sentences. Don't make people (or AI) wait for it.

**PROOF:** Provide supporting details, examples, data, and context.

# Example — The Wrong Way:

“Welcome to our blog! Today we're going to discuss an important topic that affects many people in our community. Personal injury law is a complex field with many considerations, and we've been proudly serving clients for over 20 years. There are many factors that can influence your case, and it's important to work with an experienced attorney who understands the nuances...”

[400 more words of fluff before finally mentioning the statute of limitations]

This content is useless to AI. The question isn't clear. The answer is buried. There's nothing to cite.

**Example —  
The Right  
Way:**

# How Long Do I Have to File a Personal Injury Claim in Nevada?

In Nevada, you have 2 years from the date of injury to file a personal injury lawsuit. This deadline is called the statute of limitations.

However, important exceptions exist:

- **Medical malpractice:** 3 years from injury OR 1 year from discovery (whichever is shorter)
- **Claims against government entities:** 2 years, but you must file a formal notice within 6 months
- **Minors:** The 2-year clock doesn't start until the minor turns 18

If you miss this deadline, you lose your right to sue — permanently. Courts almost never grant exceptions.

If you've been injured, don't wait. Contact our office for a free consultation to discuss your options.

This content is perfect for AI. Clear question. Immediate answer. Specific details. Easy to cite.

# Content Types That Get Cited:

**FAQ pages** with natural-language questions. Not “Service FAQs” — actual questions like “How much does a kitchen remodel cost in Miami?”

**“How to” guides** with clear, numbered steps.

**Definition pages** that explain industry terms. “What is GEO?” “What is a living trust?”

**Comparison content.** “LLC vs. S-Corp: Which is Right for Your Business?”

**List posts.** “7 Signs You Need a New Roof” — formatted with clear structure.

**Local guides.** “The Complete Guide to Hiring a Plumber in Denver”

**Statistics and original research.** Any proprietary data you can share becomes a citeable source.

# The Content Checklist:

Before publishing any content, ask:

- Does the headline ask a question people would ask AI?
- Is the answer in the first paragraph?
- Is the content structured with clear headings?
- Are there specific facts, numbers, or steps?
- Is it comprehensive enough to be THE answer?
- Is it better than what competitors have published?
- Would you cite this if you were writing an article on this topic?

**One more thing:** Update your existing content.

You probably have dozens or hundreds of pages on your website already. Review your most important pages — homepage, service pages, location pages — and restructure them using the Question-Answer-Proof framework.

This isn't about creating more content. It's about making your existing content more useful to AI.

# **PILLAR 4: Citation Tracking**

**Monitor, measure, and iterate.**

GEO isn't a one-time project. It's an ongoing process. AI models update constantly. Competitors improve their presence. The landscape shifts. You need to track your visibility over time so you know what's working and can catch problems early.

# Set Up Manual Tracking:

Create a spreadsheet with these columns:

| Date | Platform | Query | Mentioned? | Position | Notes |

Every week, run 5-10 key queries in ChatGPT, Perplexity, and check Google AI Overviews. Record whether you appear, where you appear, and any notable changes.

# Queries to track:

- "Best [your service] in [your city]"
- "Who should I hire for [your service] in [your area]"
- "Top-rated [your industry] companies in [your region]"
- "[Competitor name] alternatives"
- Questions directly related to your services

# What to do when you appear:

Celebrate — but also investigate. Ask yourself:

- What query triggered this recommendation?
- What content or source is AI citing?
- Can I create more content similar to what's working?
- Are there related queries I might also win?

Double down on what's working. If AI is recommending you for one query, you might be able to expand to similar queries.

# What to do when you disappear:

Don't panic — but do investigate. Ask yourself:

- Did I change something on my website?
- Did my information become inconsistent somewhere?
- Did a competitor improve their presence?
- Did AI models update?

Check your listings for consistency. Review your content for freshness. Look for new competitors who might be appearing.

# Track competitors too:

You should know:

- Which competitors are getting recommended
- What queries they appear for
- What they're doing differently
- Where they're being mentioned that you're not

Competitive intelligence helps you identify gaps and opportunities.

# The rhythm:

Weekly: Run your tracking queries and update your spreadsheet.

Monthly: Review trends. What's improving? What's declining? What patterns do you see?

Quarterly: Do a comprehensive audit. Re-run your full AI visibility audit. Compare to your baseline. Assess progress and adjust strategy.

# CHAPTER

# 5

## **The 7 Mistakes Keeping You Invisible to AI**

After analyzing thousands of businesses, we've identified the most common mistakes that keep businesses invisible to AI. If you're not appearing in recommendations, one or more of these is probably why.

# MISTAKE #1: Ignoring Google Business Profile

Your GBP is the foundation of your entity. If it's incomplete, inconsistent, or abandoned, AI doesn't trust that you're a real business.

We see this constantly: businesses with gorgeous websites but GBP profiles that haven't been updated in years. Missing photos. No posts. No responses to reviews. Incomplete service listings.

AI sees this and concludes: this business isn't actively engaged. Maybe they're not even open anymore.

**The fix:** Complete your profile 100%. Add all photos. Post weekly. Respond to every review within 24 hours. Treat your GBP like the front door to your business — because increasingly, it is.

# MISTAKE #2: Inconsistent NAP Across Directories

"Smith & Associates Law" on Google. "Smith and Associates" on Yelp.  
"Smith Associates LLC" on LinkedIn.

To a human, these are obviously the same business. To AI, these might be three different entities.

Inconsistency creates confusion. Confusion means AI can't confidently say who you are. If AI can't confidently identify you, it won't confidently recommend you.

**The fix:** Audit every directory. Make your name, address, and phone number identical everywhere. Yes, this is tedious. Yes, it matters.

# MISTAKE #3: Content That Doesn't Answer Questions

Your website is full of content about how great you are. But does it answer the questions people are actually asking AI?

We review websites every day where the homepage is a beautiful brand statement that doesn't answer a single question. The service pages talk about "our approach" and "our values" but never address "how much does this cost?" or "how long does this take?"

AI can't cite content that doesn't answer questions. It needs concrete, specific, useful information.

**The fix:** Create FAQ pages with real questions. Restructure your content using the Question-Answer-Proof framework. Give direct answers. Be specific.

# MISTAKE #4: No External Mentions

If the only place your business is mentioned is on your own website, AI has no external validation.

Think about it from AI's perspective: you say you're great. But nobody else is saying it. Why should AI trust your self-promotion?

This is one of the hardest problems to solve, because you can't just buy external mentions. You have to earn them.

**The fix:** Invest in PR, guest posting, podcast appearances, and community engagement. Build relationships that lead to legitimate mentions. This takes time, but there's no shortcut.

# MISTAKE #5: Fake or Thin Reviews

AI is getting better at detecting fake reviews. And having only 5-star reviews with generic text ("Great service! Would recommend!") looks suspicious.

Equally problematic: having very few reviews at all. A business that's been around for 10 years but only has 12 Google reviews raises questions.

**The fix:** Focus on earning authentic reviews from real customers. Make it easy for satisfied customers to leave reviews. Don't ask for specific ratings — just ask for honest feedback. Volume and recency matter more than a perfect 5.0.

# MISTAKE #6: Outdated Information Everywhere

Old phone numbers that don't work. Addresses for locations you closed years ago. Team members who left the company. Services you no longer offer.

Every piece of outdated information signals that you're not an active, well-maintained business. AI prefers to recommend current, actively-engaged businesses.

**The fix:** Audit all your online mentions quarterly. Update everything. Remove dead listings. Correct outdated information. Keep everything fresh.

# MISTAKE #7: Waiting for This to Become Obvious

This might be the biggest mistake of all.

Most businesses hear about GEO and think: "Interesting. Maybe I'll look into that next year."

By next year, their competitors will have spent 12 months building AI visibility. The early-mover advantage will be gone. The businesses that acted first will be established. The ones that waited will be playing catch-up.

**The fix:** Start now. Today. Even imperfect action beats perfect inaction. Run your AI visibility audit. Update your Google Business Profile. Create one FAQ page. Do something.

The window is open. But it won't stay open forever.

# CHAPTER 6

## **Your 30-Day GEO Quick Start Plan**

You now understand what GEO is, why it matters, and how AI decides who to recommend. But understanding isn't enough. You need to take action.

This 30-day plan gives you a concrete roadmap to start building your AI visibility. It's not comprehensive — that would take months — but it's enough to establish a foundation and start seeing progress.

# **Week 1: Audit & Foundation**

**Days 1-7**

# Days 1-2: Complete Your AI Visibility Audit

Run the full audit described in Pillar 1:

- Test 5+ queries in ChatGPT
- Test the same queries in Perplexity
- Check Google AI Overviews for your main keywords
- Document where you appear and don't appear
- Note competitor mentions

Create a simple report: What did you find? What's working? What's missing?

# Days 3-4: Google Business Profile Deep Dive

Spend two full days on your GBP:

- Complete every single field
- Add at least 10 high-quality photos
- Write a compelling business description
- Add all services and products
- Verify hours are accurate
- Create your first post
- Respond to any unanswered reviews

# Days 5-7: Directory Audit

Create a spreadsheet of your top 20 directories. For each one, note:

- Is the listing claimed?
- Is the NAP exactly consistent?
- Is the profile complete?
- When was it last updated?

Identify which directories need attention first.

**Week 1 Deliverable:** Baseline visibility report + GBP optimized + directory audit spreadsheet

# **Week 2: Entity Building**

**Days 8-14**

# Days 8-10: Claim & Update Top Directories

Work through the 10 highest-priority directories from your audit:

- Claim any unclaimed listings
- Update all NAP information for consistency
- Complete profile fields
- Add photos where possible

Don't try to do all 20 this week. Focus on quality over quantity.

# Days 11-12: Website NAP & Contact Updates

Ensure your website clearly displays your NAP:

- Add NAP to footer (on every page)
- Create or update Contact page with complete information
- Verify NAP matches directories exactly

# Days 13-14: Add Schema Markup

Implement LocalBusiness schema on your website. If you're not technical, this may require a developer. At minimum, include:

- Business name
- Address
- Phone
- Hours
- Description
- Geo-coordinates

**Week 2 Deliverable:** 10 directories updated + website NAP verified + schema markup implemented

# **Week 3: Content Optimization**

**Days 15-21**

# Days 15-17: Create an FAQ Page

Create a comprehensive FAQ page with at least 10 questions:

- Use natural-language questions (how people actually ask)
- Provide direct, specific answers
- Structure with Question-Answer-Proof framework
- Add FAQPage schema markup

# Days 18-19: Optimize Your Homepage

Rewrite your homepage to answer key questions:

- What do you do?
- Who do you serve?
- What makes you different?
- What should someone do next?

Cut the fluff. Add specifics. Make it easy for AI to understand what you're about.

# Days 20-21: Create One Pillar Content Piece

Create one comprehensive, "definitive guide" piece of content on a core topic for your business. This should be:

- 1,500+ words
- Structured with clear headings
- Full of specific, useful information
- Better than anything your competitors have
- Designed to be THE answer to a common question

**Week 3 Deliverable:** FAQ page published + homepage updated + pillar content published

# **Week 4: Tracking & Outreach**

**Days 22-28**

# Days 22-23: Set Up Tracking System

Create your citation tracking spreadsheet:

- List 10 key queries to monitor
- Set up columns for date, platform, query, result, notes
- Run initial tracking for all queries
- Document baseline

# Days 24-25: Second AI Visibility Audit

Run the full audit again, just as you did in Week 1:

- Same queries, same platforms
- Compare results to your baseline
- Document any changes (positive or negative)

Has anything improved? This is your first progress check.

# Days 26-28: Begin Outreach

Initiate at least one external mention opportunity:

- Identify a podcast you could appear on
- Find a publication that accepts guest posts
- Reach out to a local journalist about a story
- Submit for a relevant award

You won't complete this in 3 days, but you'll start the process.

**Week 4 Deliverable:** Tracking system in place + second audit complete + one outreach initiated

**What You  
Should  
Expect**

# After 30 days:

You won't have transformed your AI visibility in a month. That takes longer. But you will have:

- A clear baseline of where you stand
- A much stronger entity foundation
- Content optimized for AI citation
- Systems in place to track progress
- Momentum

# After 60-90 days:

If you continue building on this foundation:

- Your entity signals will strengthen
- AI may begin mentioning you for some queries
- You'll have data on what's working
- Your content library will be growing

# After 6 months:

Businesses that consistently execute GEO strategy typically see:

- Regular AI recommendations for core queries
- Increased leads from non-Google sources
- A defensible competitive advantage

The key is consistency. GEO isn't a one-time project. It's an ongoing practice.

# CHAPTER 7

## What Happens Next

You've made it to the end. You now understand more about GEO than 99% of business owners.

You know:

- How search has fundamentally changed
- Why SEO alone is no longer enough
- How AI decides who to recommend
- The four pillars of effective GEO
- The mistakes keeping businesses invisible
- A concrete plan to start building visibility

The question is: what will you do with this knowledge?

**You Have  
Two  
Options:**

# Option A: Implement GEO Yourself

Everything in this ebook is actionable. You can take the 30-day plan, the four pillars, and the checklists and execute them yourself.

This works. Many businesses do it successfully. But it requires:

- 5-10 hours per week of focused effort
- Patience (results take 3-6 months to materialize)
- Commitment to staying current (AI platforms evolve constantly)
- Willingness to experiment and iterate

If you have the time, the inclination, and the patience — go for it. The framework works.

# Option B: Partner With Experts Who've Done This 13,277 Times

At Digital Wins, we've been studying AI search since the beginning. We've built systems for tracking AI visibility, frameworks for optimizing entities, and processes for creating content that gets cited.

We've done this 13,277 times. We know what works and what doesn't. We stay on top of every algorithm change, every platform update, every shift in how AI evaluates businesses.

When you work with us, you get:

- A team that's already solved the problems you're facing
- Faster results (we don't need to learn as we go)
- Ongoing monitoring and optimization
- More time to focus on running your business

It's an investment. But for many businesses, the ROI is clear.

# If You Want to Explore Working Together:

We offer a **free GEO Strategy Call** — no obligation, no pressure, no sales pitch.

On the call, we'll:

- Audit how AI currently sees your business (live, in real-time)
- Show you exactly where you stand vs. competitors
- Give you specific recommendations (even if you never hire us)
- Answer your questions about GEO

This isn't a disguised sales call. It's a genuine consultation. We've found that the best clients are the ones who understand the opportunity before we start working together.

**To Book  
Your Call:**

**Visit:**  
**[digitalwins.ai/strategy-call](https://digitalwins.ai/strategy-call)**

Or call us directly: [phone number]

# A Final Thought:

"The best time to start GEO was a year ago. The second best time is today."

Your competitors aren't reading this ebook. They're not thinking about AI recommendations. They're still obsessing over Google rankings while the world changes around them.

That's your advantage.

The businesses that understand this shift — and act on it — will own the recommendations in their industry. They'll get leads their competitors don't know exist. They'll build a presence that's increasingly difficult to displace.

The ones that wait will wake up one day wondering why their phone stopped ringing.

I know which side I'd rather be on.

The window is open. Walk through it.

**Matt LaClear** Cofounder, Digital Wins Pioneers of GEO

# APPENDIX

## **The Complete GEO Audit Checklist**

Print this section. Use it as your working document. Check off items as you complete them.

# AI VISIBILITY AUDIT

- Tested 5+ queries in ChatGPT
- Tested same queries in Perplexity
- Checked Google AI Overviews for main keywords
- Documented where I appear / don't appear
- Noted competitor mentions
- Established baseline date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

# **GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE**

- Business name is accurate
- Address is complete and correct
- Phone number is correct
- Hours are accurate (including holidays)
- Business description is complete
- All services/products are listed
- Categories are correct
- At least 10 photos uploaded
- Created first post
- Responded to all reviews
- Q&A section has content

# **DIRECTORY CONSISTENCY**

For each major directory, verify:

# **Google Business Profile**

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

# Bing Places

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

# Apple Maps

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

# Yelp

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

# Facebook Business

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

# **LinkedIn Company Page**

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

# **Industry- Specific Directory:**

---

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

# **Industry- Specific Directory:**

---

- Claimed and verified
- NAP matches standard

**BBB**

- Listed (or not applicable)
- NAP matches standard

# Local Chamber of Commerce

- Listed
- NAP matches standard

**(Continue for  
remaining  
directories...)**

# NAP STANDARD

Document your official NAP here:

**Business Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Every listing should match this exactly.

# **WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION**

- NAP in footer
- NAP on Contact page
- LocalBusiness schema implemented
- Organization schema implemented
- FAQPage schema implemented (if applicable)
- FAQ page created with 10+ questions
- Homepage answers key questions clearly
- Content follows Question-Answer-Proof structure

# **EXTERNAL AUTHORITY**

- Listed in 20+ directories
- At least one news/PR mention (or in progress)
- Guest post published (or in progress)
- Podcast appearance (or in progress)
- Award submission (if applicable)
- Partner mentions identified

# TRACKING SYSTEM

- Tracking spreadsheet created
- 10 key queries identified
- Weekly tracking schedule set:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Baseline documented

# **30-DAY PROGRESS**

- Week 1 complete: Audit & foundation
- Week 2 complete: Entity building
- Week 3 complete: Content optimization
- Week 4 complete: Tracking & outreach
- Second audit completed and compared to baseline

**BACK  
COVER**

# DIGITAL WINS

**Pioneers of GEO**

13,277+ Campaigns | 16 Years of Experience | 100% U.S.-Based

# Ready to Get Recommended by AI?

Book your free GEO Strategy Call:

**[digitalwins.ai/strategy-call](https://digitalwins.ai/strategy-call)**

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