



Desert Sky Media

FREE GUIDE · 2026 EDITION · DESERT SKY MEDIA

The Small Business Guide to Getting Found in the Age of AI

7 Practical Steps to Improve Your Visibility in Google, ChatGPT & AI
Search

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Introduction

Think about how you searched for a business several years ago.

You might have typed "accountant near me," "roof repair," or "business attorney" into Google. Then you reviewed websites, read a few reviews, and decided whom to call.

People still search that way.

But they can also ask much more detailed questions:

"Who is a reliable roofing contractor in my area who handles storm damage and can explain the insurance process?"

"Which CPA works with small business owners who have employees in multiple states?"

"Who is an experienced local attorney who handles commercial contract disputes?"

Google's AI-powered experiences and tools such as ChatGPT create additional ways for people to research businesses and evaluate their options.

This does not mean traditional SEO is dead.

It means businesses should be thinking beyond individual keywords.

The businesses that explain their services clearly, demonstrate relevant expertise, and make useful information accessible are better positioned to compete for attention.

Here are seven practical steps you can take.

THE 7 STEPS

1. Understand How AI-Assisted Search Finds Information
2. Stop Writing for Keywords Alone
3. Answer the Questions Your Ideal Clients Actually Ask
4. Make Your Expertise Easy to Verify
5. Make Sure Search Tools Can Access Your Content
6. See What Google and ChatGPT Actually Say
7. Don't Lose the Clients Who Find You

STEP 1

01 Understand How AI-Assisted Search Finds Information

Traditional search often presents a list of web pages related to someone's query.

AI-assisted search can also gather information from relevant sources and present a more conversational response, sometimes including links or citations.

Different tools use different methods.

Google's AI search features draw on Google's existing Search systems and index ([Google: AI features and your website](#)).

ChatGPT search may search the web to retrieve current information and link to relevant sources ([OpenAI: ChatGPT search](#)).

This creates an important opportunity:

Your website should help both humans and search tools understand what your business actually does.

ACTION TO TAKE

Write down five detailed questions prospective clients might ask when looking for a business like yours.

Focus on their specific concerns, not just the services you sell.

STEP 2

02 Stop Writing for Keywords Alone

There was a time when many businesses were sold short blog posts designed primarily to repeat phrases such as:

- "Best plumber in Phoenix"
- "Top accountant in Dallas"
- "Affordable business lawyer near me"

Repeating keywords is not a substitute for useful information.

Google's published guidance prioritizes helpful, reliable, people-first content and warns against producing pages primarily to manipulate search rankings ([Google: helpful, people-first content](#)).

Keywords still have a role in describing relevant topics.

But a page should actually answer the question that brought someone there.

INSTEAD OF

"We are the best roofing company offering quality roofing services and affordable roofing solutions."

TRY

"After a major hailstorm, homeowners often need to know whether their roof requires repairs or replacement, how inspections work, and what documentation an insurance company may request."

The second example addresses a real problem.

It gives readers information that can help them make a decision.

ACTION TO TAKE

Review your five most important service pages.

Ask whether each page explains the service, answers common concerns, and helps a prospective client decide what to do next.

STEP 3

03 Answer the Questions Your Ideal Clients Actually Ask

People do not always know the professional terminology for the service they need.

They understand their problem.

A homeowner may not know the technical name for an HVAC component. They know their air conditioner stopped working on Sunday.

A business owner may not know which accounting service they need. They know their tax situation has become more complicated.

A business facing a contract dispute may not know what kind of attorney to contact.

Your website should connect those everyday concerns to your expertise.

CONTRACTOR EXAMPLE

"What should I do if my air conditioner stops working over the weekend?"

ATTORNEY EXAMPLE

"What should a business owner prepare before discussing a contract dispute with an attorney?"

CPA EXAMPLE

"What records should a growing business organize before meeting with a CPA?"

Each of these questions offers an opportunity to educate a prospective client before asking for their business.

ACTION TO TAKE

Identify ten questions that prospects routinely ask your office.

Answer those questions clearly on the appropriate service pages or in a well-organized FAQ section.

For legal, financial, and medical subjects, ensure the answers are reviewed by properly qualified professionals.

STEP 4

04 Make Your Expertise Easy to Verify

A website should not expect visitors to accept vague claims such as "best," "trusted," or "industry-leading" without supporting information.

Instead, provide specific, accurate evidence.

Depending on your industry, that might include:

- Clearly explained services and locations served
- Accurate professional credentials or licenses
- Genuine client reviews, where permitted
- Helpful examples of completed work
- Professional biographies and experience

- Transparent explanations of your process
- Accurate contact and business information

For a contractor, photographs and explanations of actual projects may help demonstrate experience.

For a CPA, accurate professional qualifications and clearly described specialties can help prospective clients evaluate fit.

For an attorney, practice-area information, relevant credentials, and appropriately presented experience can establish credibility.

ACTION TO TAKE

Review your website as though you have never heard of your company.

Can you quickly determine what the business does, where it operates, and what evidence supports its claims?

Remove unsupported superlatives. Replace them with useful facts.

STEP 5

05 Make Sure Search Tools Can Access Your Content

Even excellent content has limited value if search engines cannot access it.

Some technical fundamentals still matter:

- Pages should be accessible to search crawlers.
- Important content should be visible as readable text.
- Pages should have clear titles and headings.
- Relevant pages should link logically to one another.
- Important pages should not accidentally be marked noindex.
- Business information should be accurate and consistent.
- Appropriate structured data should describe actual visible content.

Google confirms that its existing SEO best practices remain relevant to its AI search features ([Google: optimizing for generative AI features](#)).

OpenAI also documents OAI-SearchBot, which websites can allow to crawl content for potential inclusion in ChatGPT search ([OpenAI: publishers and developers FAQ](#)).

Allowing search crawlers does not guarantee a business will appear in an AI-generated answer.

ACTION TO TAKE

Ask your webmaster or technical team to review your website's indexing, crawlability, important service pages, and search crawler settings.

Avoid paying for supposed secret AI-search tricks or guaranteed recommendations.

STEP 6

06 See What Google and ChatGPT Actually Say

One of the simplest ways to investigate your business's visibility is to test realistic search questions.

Open Google and ChatGPT and ask the kinds of questions your prospective clients might ask. For example:

"Who provides emergency HVAC repair in [city]?"

"Which attorneys in [city] handle commercial lease disputes?"

"Who are the CPAs in [city] specializing in small business tax planning?"

Then examine the responses.

- Does your business appear?
- Are competitors mentioned?
- What sources are cited?
- Does your own website clearly explain the same services and qualifications?

Remember that AI-generated answers may differ depending on the query, location, available information, and search system.

A single test cannot establish how frequently your business appears or why it was included or excluded.

ACTION TO TAKE

Create a simple list of ten realistic search questions.

Record the date, search tool, question, sources cited, and whether your business appeared.

Repeat the process periodically using consistent conditions to look for patterns.

07 STEP 7 Don't Lose the Clients Who Find You

Getting discovered is important.

But discovery alone does not create revenue.

A prospective client might find your business at 9:30 PM, while your office is closed.

They may have questions that your website doesn't answer.

Or they may be ready to request an estimate but cannot easily schedule one.

These are potential points of friction. Consider how your business handles:

- After-hours inquiries
- Missed phone calls
- Estimate requests
- Consultation scheduling
- Online appointment booking
- Follow-up communication
- Returning clients

The right approach depends on the business.

An emergency plumbing company has different needs from a law firm or accounting practice.

The objective isn't to automate everything.

It's to make the next step clear and convenient, while keeping appropriate human judgment and oversight.

ACTION TO TAKE

Visit your website on a phone outside business hours.

Pretend you're a first-time client.

See how easy it is to get an answer, make contact, or request the next available appointment.

Record anything that creates unnecessary friction.

SELF-CHECK

Your AI Visibility Checklist

- ☐ 1. Our important services are clearly explained.
- ☐ 2. We answer real questions prospective clients ask.
- ☐ 3. Our expertise and credentials are easy to verify.
- ☐ 4. Our business and location information are accurate.
- ☐ 5. Our important website pages are accessible to search engines.
- ☐ 6. We've tested realistic questions in Google and ChatGPT.
- ☐ 7. Prospective clients can easily contact us or request service.

This checklist is a starting point, not a technical audit or ranking guarantee.

NEXT STEP

Curious How Your Business Shows Up in AI Search?

You've learned seven practical ways to improve your website's visibility and usefulness.

The next question is how your own business measures up.

Let's look at your online presence, discuss where prospective clients might be encountering friction, and identify practical improvements worth considering.

Book an AI Visibility & Business Growth Conversation →

Schedule online at desertskymedia.net/book

Sources & Further Reading

Google — Creating Helpful, Reliable, People-First Content

<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content>

Google — Optimizing Your Website for Generative AI Features

<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/ai-optimization-guide>

Google — AI Features and Your Website

<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/ai-features>

OpenAI — ChatGPT Search

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/9237897-conducting-your-searches-on-search>

OpenAI — Publishers and Developers FAQ

<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/12627856>

Questions? Let's Talk.

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Want to Explore Your Own AI Search Visibility?

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