

GENERATIVE ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (GEO) FOR B2C BRANDS

*An Alternative Approach
to SEO for AI-Driven
Answer Engines*



Overview

AI-driven answer engines like ChatGPT are now used by more than a billion people for the same reason they use traditional search engines: To discover and learn. This also applies to consumer product discovery – even unprompted content – with brands that show up during early research influencing consumer mindset. With higher-income consumers being twice as likely to use AI, visibility in this space is key for brands.

But standing out through generative engine optimization (GEO), requires brands to treat AI engines separately and differently from SEO. This is where off-site GEO on public forums and review sites will play a large role.



“Fewer than 10% of the sources cited in ChatGPT, Gemini and Copilot rank in the top 10 Google organic search results for the same query – meaning SEO tactics won’t guarantee brand visibility in AI.”

eMarketer



61.1%

of users trust generative AI engines *more* than search engines

800 million

people used ChatGPT weekly in October 2025

60%

of US adults have used AI to search for information

2.1%

of user prompts mention “purchasable products”, AI made product recommendations in about 1/3 of non-shopping conversations

96.7%

of searches are still on traditional engines (Google/Bing) as of August 2025

AI by the Numbers

Much like Google Search, AI engines release new models every year. In fact, there have been more than a dozen core updates in the last four years. So, brands will need to be nimble when it comes to GEO strategies, treating AI as a separate brand channel that requires constant attention.

In general, AI answer engines are tuned to measure expertise, consistency and trust, so creating assets that inform, explain, evaluate and clarify should be a primary focus for brands. In other words, be the authoritative expert – not the sales guy.

Rethinking “Awareness” as an AI-first Customer Journey

We’ve been talking about immediate gratification and personalization for years, but AI creates even more opportunities to reach consumers at the moment they first ask for a solution or guidance. This is a key point of influence for brands – right at the conversion stage. However, research indicates AI conversions produce 27% less revenue than non-AI visits, and only 5.7% of users click through to ChatGPT responses.

So, when measuring AI programs, it’s best to consider it a brand channel for awareness, not a conversion or sales channel. But this isn’t a clear, linear consumer journey, so both AI mentions and the awareness impact generated by those AI mentions are important KPIs. Make your brand the one trusted for answers and your whole funnel benefits.



“Awareness is about influencing the answer, not winning the click. Brands that invest early will own the new discovery layer while others optimize a funnel than no longer behaves the same.”

Josh Grant, Webflow

Content on Steroids

As far as content is concerned, product detail pages (PDPs) should be created to include the consumer needs a brand's products or services can fulfill so these key phrases can be picked up by the GEO algorithms. In fact, experts (including Modern Impact) now recommend three sets of site content optimized for Media, SEO and GEO: one for direct traffic, one for search engines, and one for generative engines.

GEO-specific content should include expertise, structured data, customer proof, technical accuracy, FAQs, reviews, third party validations and credibility/authoritative presence.

"If everyone is special, then no one will be"
Incredibles

FAQs for example, currently appear 848% more often on top performing pages on AI. However as everyone does it, they become less relevant....

Write more on this

(Community) Content is King

While different AI engines cite a variety of sources, one of their favorites is community content – including public forums like Reddit and YouTube, along with review sites like Yelp and Trip Advisor. Given its use across an expansive, diverse, global audience, Facebook is another heavily sourced community.

"Brands are no longer competing for keywords but to be the entity the model trusts enough to recommend."
Josh Grant, Webflow

When creating a strategy for community content, brands should focus on category-specific content forums where their consumers are likely searching for answers and recommendations that relate to the products and/or services they sell.

Transitioning to AI-first for GEO

We all survived the digital transformation. Now we have an entity that can't be neatly contained within the omni-channel. So, two key topics rule when it comes to optimizing for AI models: Flexibility and Adaptability. This is not a one-and-done, revisit SEO quarterly type of project. This is a hands-on, ever-changing initiative. Build a solid foundation, measure and analyze regularly, create open communication channels with your team – and then plan to adapt.

Key Tactics

- Work with UX/UI to create a solid foundation for structured data and content. Each PDP page should be consistent and follow the same quality standards for content.
- Treat GEO like an unknown by constantly testing and experimenting across the models with prompts, then track how (and if) your brand appears, how users interact and if awareness measurements increase.
- While the principles for content should stay the same (trust, authority, clear information architecture), the interfaces and APIs will change. Content and brand teams should create learning loops to measure and shift strategy if needed.

Conclusion

As GEO continues to evolve, so must our ability to adapt and rethink how we're visible to consumers. And, with 96.7% of searches still conducted on traditional engines, we're still on the cusp of how GEO will affect our brand presence. Modern Impact is as flexible as ever to help guide our clients and help engineer successful solutions – give us a call to discuss your GEO strategy.