

THE AI CITATION PLAYBOOK

7 ways to become the source AI chatbots mention

FOR BRANDS, EXPERTS & CREATORS



Visibility starts before the prompt

AI systems can only surface what they can discover, understand and trust.

1

DISCOVERABLE

Can the systems access it?

2

USEFUL

Does it answer a real need?

3

CREDIBLE

Is it worth trusting and quoting?



No tactic guarantees a citation. Build the strongest evidence.

1

LET CRAWLERS IN

Check robots.txt, noindex rules, CDN settings and login walls.



Googlebot

GOOGLE SEARCH

Needed for eligibility in Google AI features.



OAI-SearchBot

CHATGPT SEARCH

Allows ChatGPT search to discover, summarize and cite pages.



Bingbot

BING / COPILOT

Supports discovery across Bing and Copilot experiences.

ACCESS = ELIGIBILITY, NOT A GUARANTEE

2

ANSWER FIRST

One page. One real question. One direct answer.

H1 = THE USER'S QUESTION

FIRST 2-3 SENTENCES = THE ANSWER

THEN = PROOF • STEPS • EXAMPLES

Can the key answer stand alone when quoted?

3

CREATE PROOF WORTH CITING

Original evidence beats recycled summaries.

01 ORIGINAL DATA

Benchmarks, surveys, experiments

02 EXPERT INSIGHT

Named people with real experience

03 OPEN METHOD

Sample, process and limitations

04 FRESHNESS

Dates, versions and visible updates

WEAK

"AI improves productivity."

CITABLE

"In our 90-day study of 42 teams..."

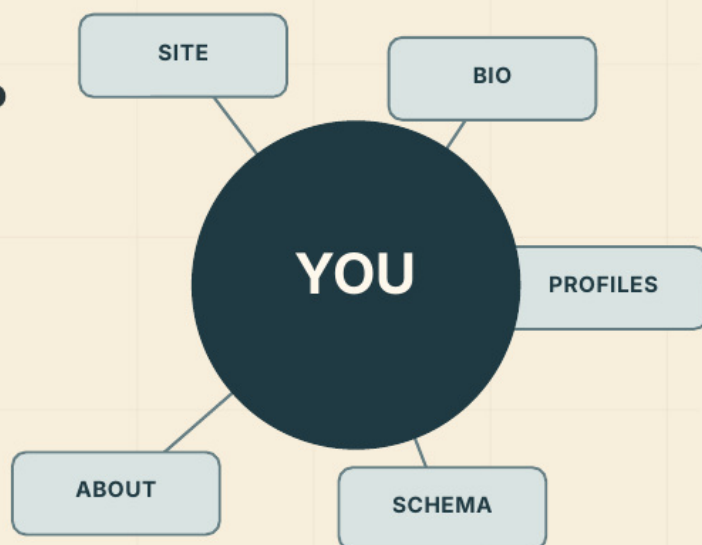
Google recommends unique, expert-led, non-commodity content that adds value beyond common knowledge.

4

BUILD YOUR ENTITY FOOTPRINT

Make it easy to verify who you are.

- ✓ **Consistent name, bio and logo**
- ✓ **Clear About and author pages**
- ✓ **Same facts across profiles**
- ✓ **Relevant Person / Organization schema**
- ✓ **Real contact and ownership signals**



Structured data should match what people can actually see.

Structured data can support understanding, but it does not guarantee visibility or citations.

5

EARN INDEPENDENT MENTIONS

Authority compounds when credible sources reference you.



PURSUE REAL MENTIONS - NOT MASS-PRODUCED PLACEMENT

Google explicitly warns against inauthentic mentions and spam-driven placement.

6

FORMAT FOR FAST EXTRACTION

Make useful passages easy to find.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

CLEAR H2 / H3

SHORT, DIRECT ANSWER

- Short paragraphs
- Lists / comparison tables
- Text versions of key facts

01 Use headings that describe the idea.

02 Keep important facts in readable text.

03 Match structured data to visible content.

04 Write for people - not for "AI hacks."

NO SPECIAL AI MARKUP REQUIRED

Google: no special schema or AI text file is required for its generative search features.

7

MEASURE PROMPT VISIBILITY

Treat AI answers like a recurring research panel.



TRACK THE SIGNALS THAT MATTER

CITATION SHARE

How often you are sourced

PROMPT COVERAGE

Where you appear or vanish

REFERRAL TRAFFIC

Visits from AI search

ChatGPT referral URLs include `utm_source=chatgpt.com`; Google and Bing provide AI visibility reporting.

THE 30-DAY AI VISIBILITY SPRINT

WEEK 1

TECHNICAL ACCESS

Crawlers, indexability, site hygiene

WEEK 2

ANSWER-FIRST PAGES

High-intent questions + direct answers

WEEK 3

EVIDENCE + ENTITY

Proof, authorship and consistent signals

WEEK 4

MENTIONS + MEASUREMENT

Outreach, prompts and referral tracking



**BECOME THE SOURCE
BEFORE YOU ASK TO BE CITED.**

Save this document • Audit one page today • Repeat monthly

Based on official guidance from Google Search Central, OpenAI and Bing Webmaster Tools. Visibility is never guaranteed.