

POLARIS

GEO & AI Search 2026

A Practical Guide for Food & Drink Marketers

How the AI Search revolution is reshaping food & drink visibility, demand and revenue and what to do about it

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Trusted by leading brands to reverse declines and grow share of voice through targeted search strategies.

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Learn about the value of our AI Visibility audit and how it can inform your growth strategy this year.

What Changed in 2025?

40%

Average decline in B2B organic traffic in 2025

Google AI Overviews

Answers appear directly in the SERP, eliminating the click entirely. Buyers get the summary without visiting your site.

LLM-Powered Research

ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity are now primary research tools for B2B buyers. Vendor shortlists form before a Google search begins.

Zero-Click Experience

Even ranked content no longer drives traffic. Visibility without citation means invisibility in the moments that matter.

Conversational Search

Complex, multi-turn queries replace keyword searches. Content optimised for keywords fails to appear in AI-synthesised answers.

THE NEW B2B BUYER JOURNEY

How your prospects research and shortlist vendors has fundamentally changed

01

Problem Aware

Buyer recognises a challenge. Turns to ChatGPT or Gemini for an explanation — not Google.

02

Vendor Discovery

AI synthesises a list of solutions and vendors. Your brand must be cited here or you're invisible.

03

Deep Evaluation

Prospect asks follow-up questions of the AI. Authoritative, structured content wins citations.

04

Branded Validation

Only now does the buyer search your brand on Google to verify credibility. Branded search spikes.

05

Direct Engagement

First contact arrives pre-qualified. They already know who you are. The sale starts mid-funnel.

The window of influence has moved upstream. If you're not present in AI-generated answers, competitors shape the shortlist before you're ever considered.

The Commercial Risk

Your site was built for this...

× Page 1 rankings

× Keyword traffic volume

× Form fills and click-throughs

× On-site user journeys

But now it must perform here...

✓ AI Overview inclusion & citation

✓ ChatGPT & Perplexity brand mentions

✓ Entity authority and structured clarity

✓ Topical expertise & external validation

⚠ Competitors already optimising for AI are shaping buyer shortlists before you appear in the conversation.

Visibility Has Been Redefined

OLD VISIBILITY

- Position 1–3 organic ranking
- Monthly search volume traffic
- Click-through rate optimisation
- Meta description appeal
- Site speed & Core Web Vitals

NEW VISIBILITY

- **AI Overview inclusion on Google**
- **ChatGPT & Gemini citations**
- **Perplexity vendor summaries**
- **AI-driven comparison rankings**
- **Entity authority in knowledge graphs**

The shift is from ranking to being referenced. From traffic to trust. From clicks to citations.

The 4 Layers of AI Visibility

01

Crawable Authority

TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

AI models can only reference what they can access and parse. Technical SEO must ensure your site is fully crawlable, fast, indexed correctly and free of ambiguity that confuses machine interpretation.

02

Structured Meaning

SEMANTIC CLARITY

AI systems interpret meaning, not just keywords. Your content must clearly define what you do, who you serve and what outcomes you deliver — using consistent language across every touchpoint.

03

Topical Depth

CONTENT COVERAGE

LLMs favour brands that demonstrate comprehensive expertise. Surface-level content is ignored. You need deep, interconnected content that covers every angle of your topic cluster.

04

External Validation

THIRD-PARTY TRUST

AI models weight brands mentioned and cited by credible external sources. Digital PR, analyst coverage, industry directories and review platforms all contribute to citation authority.

Weak layers reduce AI confidence in your brand — and reduce the likelihood of citation.

The AI Retrieval Gap

The six structural gaps most commonly found across websites in Q1 2026

01 Blog-heavy, service-light

Extensive blog archives with thin, undifferentiated service pages. AI can't extract clear value propositions.

02 Generic positioning

Descriptions like 'innovative solutions for modern businesses' signal nothing to an LLM — or a buyer.

03 Weak differentiation

No clear articulation of why you over a competitor. AI answers default to the most defined brand.

04 Limited social proof

Case studies buried or absent. AI models weight external evidence of credibility heavily.

05 Disconnected strategy

SEO and demand generation running in silos. Neither optimised for AI-era buyer journeys.

06 No AI visibility tracking

Without monitoring LLM citations, you have no idea whether you're winning or losing share of voice.

What Good Looks Like

AI-ready B2B websites share these characteristics. How many can you check off?

✓ **Clear, specific service pages**
Each page defines exactly what you do, who it's for, and the outcome. No generic filler.

✓ **Named experts with authority**
Individuals with credentials, bylines, and LinkedIn presence. AI trusts people, not just brands.

✓ **Case studies with specifics**
Real clients, measurable outcomes, recognisable verticals. Social proof AI models can cite.

✓ **External media and citations**
Coverage in relevant trade press, analyst reports, and industry directories.

✓ **Defined market positioning**
Your differentiation is explicit. A prospect (or an AI) can state precisely why you're different.

✓ **Structured FAQs with schema**
Common questions answered comprehensively in a format AI can parse and cite directly.

✓ **Consistent terminology**
The language you use matches how buyers and AI describe your category. No jargon mismatch.

✓ **AI visibility tracking in place**
Regular monitoring of how and where your brand appears inside AI-generated answers.

The 90-Day AI Visibility Reset

A structured, 12-week programme to identify gaps and begin recapturing AI share of voice

WEEK 1

Audit & Benchmark

- Map current AI citations vs competitors
- Identify where shortlists form without you
- Assess technical crawlability and schema
- Baseline brand mention monitoring

WEEK 2

Strengthen Clarity

- Rewrite core service and solution pages
- Define and document positioning clearly
- Add named expert profiles with credentials
- Implement FAQ schema across key pages

WEEK 3

Expand Coverage

- Map high-intent topic gaps vs AI answers
- Produce or update pillar content assets
- Build internal linking for topical authority
- Develop case study content with clear outcomes

WEEK 4

Validate & Track

- Outreach for digital PR and media coverage
- Submit to relevant industry directories
- Establish AI citation monitoring cadence
- Set 90-day milestones and tracking dashboard

This is structural correction, not a website rebuild. Measurable results typically begin within 60 days.

OUR CREDENTIALS

Trusted by Leading Brands

CLIENTS

Thomson Reuters

CACI

Sodexo

Six Degrees

Sidetrade

Hampers.com

Paradox London

Virginia Hayward

ACCREDITATIONS

Best Use of Search 2025

Best SEO Campaign 2025

BIMA ACCREDITED

GOLDMAN SACHS 10KSB
BUSINESS

15+

Years' Experience

200+

Campaigns Delivered

Top 5%

UK Agency Ranking

AI Visibility Diagnostic

A complimentary 30-minute briefing and audit to identify where you're losing AI share of voice — and what to do about it.

[Book Your Diagnostic →](#)

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What You'll Get

AI Citation Audit

See exactly where (and whether) your brand appears inside AI-generated answers for your key solution areas.

Competitor Comparison

Understand which competitors are being cited in your place — and why AI favours them over you.

Gap Identification

A prioritised list of the structural changes needed to improve your AI retrieval score.

90-Day Roadmap

A clear, actionable plan to recapture AI share of voice and align your content with the new buyer journey.