

GENERATIVE ENGINE OPTIMIZATION GUIDE:

A HOLISTIC BLUEPRINT

A step-by-step framework for brands to
win credibility in the age of AI engines



PROPER PROPAGANDA

Unless you've been on Mars for the past while, you've likely heard that AI tools such as ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews and Perplexity are fast becoming the new gateways to the internet. It's been assiduously reported on, to the point that you may already be annoyed reading this document.

Our apologies for adding to the cacophony. However, the bottom line is buyers, and any other stakeholders your organization has, now ask AI engines for advice, and those engines decide which brands deserve a seat at the table. So you need to get this right, which is, unfortunately, not easy.

Though a newer discipline and preoccupation for PR and marketing teams, we can say with certainty that Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) is a moving target that demands ongoing fine-tuning, fresh authority signals, and constant reinforcement in the places AI scrapes for answers to queries.

THE PROBLEM: FRAGMENTED INFORMATION

Compounding the dynamic nature of GEO is that, to date, the GEO advice on the web is fragmented and fails to take a holistic view of what is truly a multi-faceted business challenge.

For that reason, this document looks at all elements involved in optimizing your brand for AI search, from the back-end technical pieces, to content marketing, earned media and other strategies an organization needs to be on top of to ensure it is showing up the right way in across key AI tools. The guide distills knowledge now—knowing well that best practices in this space evolve. GEO, like PR, content marketing and SEO, necessitates an open mind and constant evolution.

WHAT IS THIS AND WHO IS IT FOR?

Think of this guide as part roadmap and part checklist for your GEO program. Some elements of it will feel familiar, others foreign. In creating this guide, we consulted market researchers, technical experts, and specialists in fields like Wikipedia management.

We detail the two multi-part phases initially, and then cover ongoing maintenance. In each section, we identify which parts of an organization should have ownership of specific deliverables.

A cautionary note before you dive in further. Do not expect overnight results from your GEO program or this blueprint. As with old-school SEO, you must commit time and budget before you should expect anything. It's realistic to see first movement within 3-4 months, if implementation is strong (site fixes, citations, media coverage, prompt mapping), but reliable, defensible results typically take 6-9 months. Full maturity of a program can take 12 months or more.

Though fundamentally action-oriented, the lessons and prescriptions in this document are for both senior decision makers tasked with creating value in organizations and those who do the doing. We believe that senior people will benefit from seeing the disparate elements that make up GEO brought together, and that execution-focused workers will benefit from the level of detail contained here.

With that in mind, let's go.

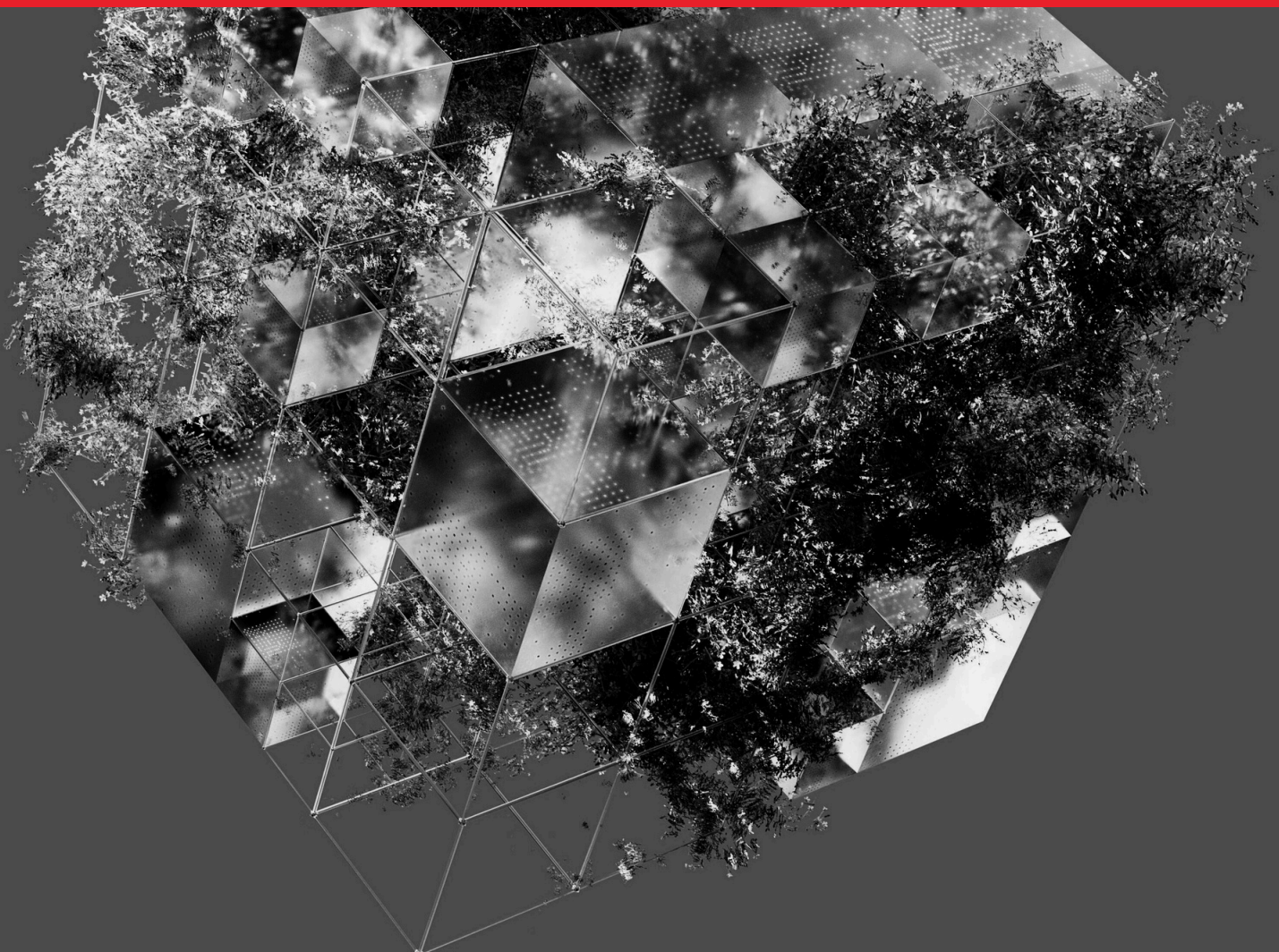
THE PROGRAM

Successful GEO work begins with a diagnostic to uncover where you stand and what's holding you back. Next comes implementation, monitoring, and iteration—fixes put into play and refined continuously so your brand stays visible, credible, and ahead as AI search evolves.

PROPER PROPAGANDA

PHASE ONE: DIAGNOSTIC

Before you can win in AI search, you need to know the ground you're standing on. The diagnostic phase gives you a clear picture of your current visibility, how different models treat your brand, and what's blocking you from showing up. It's about hard data and a roadmap for where to focus first.



DISCOVERY & ALIGNMENT

Things kick off by getting clear on the basics: your goals, your competitors, your audiences, and the topics you want to own. This alignment keeps the rest of the program focused and measurable.

Action Items

- ☐ Kickoff call with client stakeholders
- ☐ Alignment on top 3-4 competitors to benchmark in AI search
- ☐ Identification of key personas (audiences and their needs)
- ☐ Prioritization of topic areas where the brand wants visibility in AI search (we'll rank and agree on the top focus areas)
- ☐ Baseline understanding of current marketing mix (media relations, content, affiliate, influencer, etc.) to inform GEO strategy

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - All deliverables listed above.

MARKET RESEARCH

AI models don't all work the same. They draw from distinct sources, and customers lean on them in varied ways. A blanket "optimize everywhere" approach is costly and inefficient. Market research zeroes in on the engines and behaviors that matter most to your current and target buyers, showing which models they use, how they use them in your category, and where your brand has the clearest path to win. Do not skip this step. It is the most glaring problem with GEO efforts today.

Action Items

- ❑ Custom segmentation research study to uncover how your audience (existing customers and target customers) uses AI tools by model, behavior, and intent
- ❑ Analysis of most recent, publicly available data on model demographics (e.g., ChatGPT vs Perplexity vs Google AIO, etc.)
- ❑ Category-specific research on AI model usage for your product vertical
- ❑ Brand-level insights on how your customers use different models for different query types (e.g., quick answers vs product comparison vs deep research)
- ❑ Recommendations on where to focus GEO efforts for maximum ROI

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Define research objectives, align segmentation criteria with client goals, integrate findings into overall GEO strategy.
- **Market research firm** - Design and execute custom segmentation study, collect and analyze audience data, deliver research outputs.

VISIBILITY BASELINE REPORT

Running an initial visibility report shows how your brand stacks up in AI search right now. Think of it as your benchmark on presence, sentiment, and citations before starting to move the needle.

Action Items

- ❑ Run a Scrunch-powered visibility audit across major AI engines (e.g. ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, Perplexity). Note that Scrunch is AI and GEO monitoring software, if you are using another program for this purpose, that is fine.
- ❑ Analyze brand presence in both aided and unaided responses to category-relevant prompts
- ❑ Identify a set of key prompts most relevant to the brand and provide a client-facing list; these become the baseline prompts tracked in Scrunch for ongoing monitoring.
- ❑ Benchmark visibility against top competitors (aligned with discovery session inputs)
- ❑ Segment performance by customer personas and key topic areas
- ❑ Assess sentiment associated with brand mentions across AI outputs
- ❑ Evaluate citation strength: how often owned content vs. third-party sources are referenced
- ❑ Identify top external publishers and platforms most frequently cited by AI models

- Highlight initial visibility gaps and missed prompt opportunities where competitors are surfacing and your brand is absent

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - All deliverables listed above.

WEBSITE AUDIT

Next you need to dig into your site to see how AI-friendly it really is. This audit reveals what's helping you get surfaced and what's holding you back, then hands you a clear roadmap for fixes.

Work here should follow **Evertune's S-E-T framework** (Structure, Explainability, Trustworthiness), which mirrors how LLMs learn (while still keeping content readable for humans):

- **Structure:** Clear headers, bullets, short paragraphs, schema
- **Explainability:** Literal, specific, no vague language
- **Trustworthiness:** Fresh, accurate, cited, reinforced across credible sources

Action Items

- ☐ Audit of key pages (FAQ, About, product/service descriptions, landing pages, etc.)
- ☐ Diagnostic report with recommendations on schema, structure, and phrasing aligned with AI engine training
- ☐ Identification of gaps in long-tail keyword coverage (natural "how/what/why" phrasing)
- ☐ Assessment of structured data/schema markup opportunities
- ☐ Review of H1/H2 hierarchy and logical page structure
- ☐ Analysis of quotable statements and authority signals
- ☐ Evaluation of semantic HTML use (headers, lists, tables)

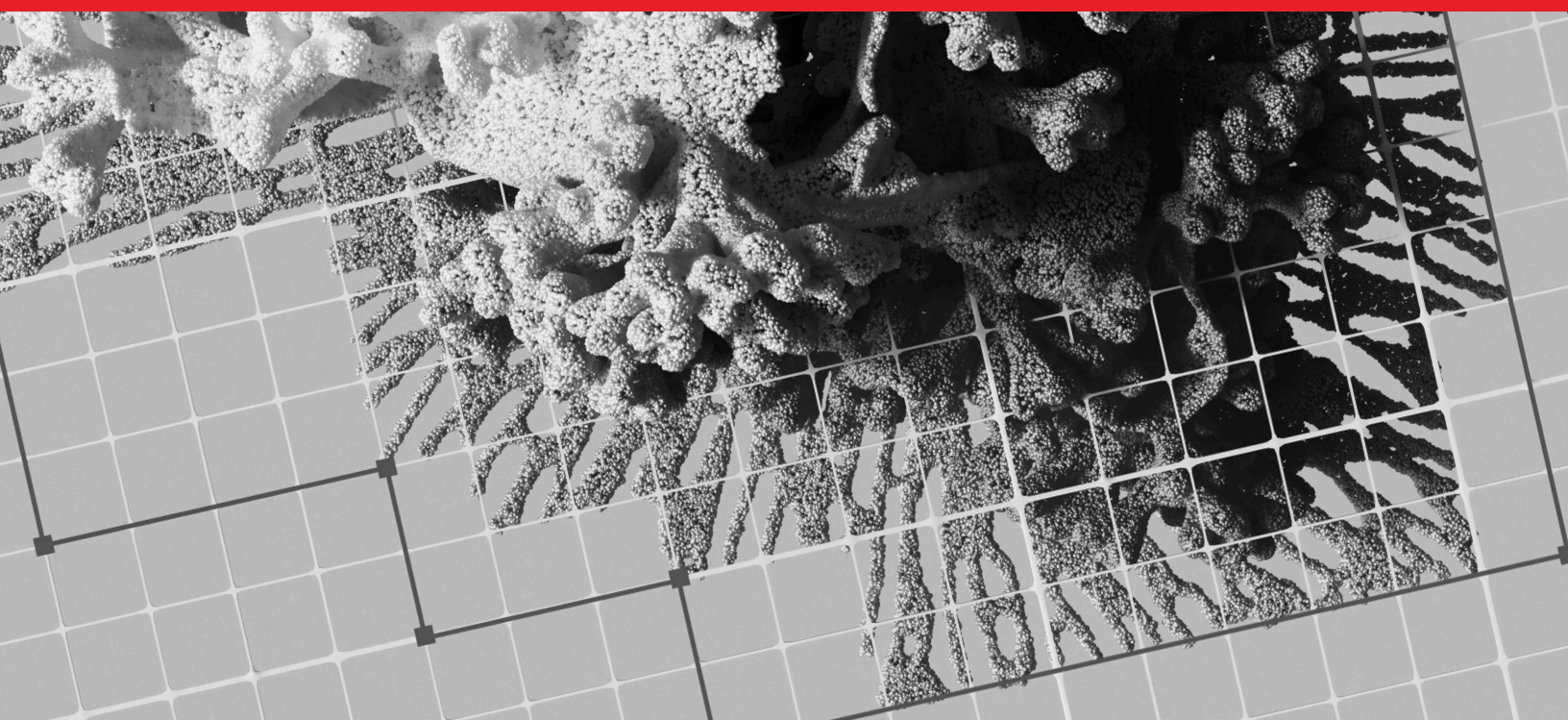
- ❑ Assessment of paragraph/section length for LLM parsing
- ❑ Review of internal linking and knowledge graph alignment
- ❑ Identification of crawlability issues in FAQ sections
- ❑ Evaluate technical accessibility for AI crawlers (robots.txt, core web vitals, JavaScript rendering)
- ❑ Review metadata and structured summaries to improve AI digestibility
- ❑ Assess emerging readiness for AI-powered shopping agents (e.g., ChatGPT Shopping, Instacart integrations) by reviewing product descriptions, structured data, and marketplace alignment

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Conduct audit, analyze site structure and content clarity, create diagnostic report with prioritized recommendations, assess emerging readiness for shopping agents, and incorporate insights from Scrunch to connect on-site findings with broader AI visibility data.
- **Web specialists (client-side or partner)** - Provide read access to CMS/templates, share sitemaps and schema artifacts, export crawl data, clarify current linking/rendering rules. Note: No code changes are made in this phase, as this is assessment only.
- **E-commerce/retail ops team (if applicable)** - Provide product feed data, marketplace listings, and other inputs needed to assess AI shopping agent readiness.

PHASE TWO: IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & ITERATION

This is where strategy turns into action. Armed with insights from Phase One, it's time to rewrite, rebuild, and reinforce your content and authority signals so AI engines start picking you up more often and more credibly. It's a cycle of optimizing, monitoring, and adapting so your gains compound while competitors scramble to catch up.



CONTENT EXECUTION

Next, we take the recommendations from the previous Website Audit stage, and implement them. The result? Clean, structured, AI-ready content will make your brand easier to surface (and harder to ignore).

Action Items

- ☐ Rewrite or optimize FAQ and service pages
- ☐ Apply recommendations on phrasing, schema-friendly formatting, and structure
- ☐ Insert long-tail, natural-language questions/answers
- ☐ Rewrite headings for clean H1/H2 hierarchy
- ☐ Create explanatory Q&A content prioritized by LLMs
- ☐ Ensure clear, quotable statements signaling expertise
- ☐ Add competitor comparison tables
- ☐ Format answers to mimic snippets or forum Q&A
- ☐ Apply semantic clustering and entity-based writing (who/what/why consistently)
- ☐ Where applicable, implement product content updates that support emerging AI shopping agents (e.g., ChatGPT Shopping, Comet, and Instacart integrations), including optimized product descriptions, structured data, and marketplace-ready copy

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Copywriting, restructuring of content, creation of new FAQ/Q&A formats, competitor comparison tables, AI-ready copy, and drafting marketplace/product copy tailored for shopping agents.
- **Web specialists (client-side or partner)** - Provide write access to CMS/templates to implement changes identified in the audit phase (e.g. headings, schema, FAQs, internal links, etc.), apply structured data, and support staging/QA/deployment.
- **E-commerce/retail ops team (if applicable)** - Update product feeds, marketplace listings, and ensure alignment between site copy and external shopping platforms.

AUTHORITY & AMPLIFICATION

Beyond your own site, AI engines lean heavily on external signals (and each engine weighs sources differently, which again attests to why you need to know what AI tools(s) your customers prefer). Some media outlets, aggregators, and forums carry outsized influence in shaping model outputs. It's about expanding your authority footprint by landing you in those high-value sources, amplifying your experts, and building credibility across the ecosystems AI scrapes most when it seeks to answer user prompts.

Action Items

- ❑ Secure brand and product/service mentions in high-authority media outlets and trusted aggregators, with a focus on sources weighted most heavily by AI models
- ❑ Diversify coverage via thought leadership and opinion pieces under your brand's spokesperson's bylines
- ❑ Secure quotes from your brand's experts (spokespeople, executives, SMEs), and then amplify them
- ❑ Expand affiliate programs to incentivize publisher coverage and influencer participation:
 - Encourage authentic user reviews and unboxing content
 - Seed beta testers from relevant communities LLMs scrape
 - Incentivize influencers to publish long-form, review-style content
- ❑ Secure inclusion in "comparison table" style lists that AI engines frequently surface

- ❑ Secure/create Wikipedia entry and citations
- ❑ Pursue analyst coverage (Gartner, Forrester, etc.)
- ❑ Build citations in datasets, GitHub, and research portals
- ❑ Facilitate authentic reviews on Reddit, Quora, Hacker News
- ❑ Identify relevant subreddits and thread ecosystems
- ❑ Build credible participation strategies (not spammy, always disclosed)
- ❑ Seed authentic mentions and FAQ-style answers aligned with brand positioning
- ❑ Drive ratings and reviews on marketplaces (Amazon, G2, App Store)

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Media relations, pitching, copywriting, affiliate program strategy, quote amplification, influencer relations, coordinating reviews/unboxings, securing comparison table placements, seeding beta testers, community participation strategy, UGC coordination.
- **Wikipedia consultants** - Creation/editing of Wikipedia entries.
- **Analyst relations agencies** - Manage analyst coverage (Gartner, Forrester, etc.).
- **E-commerce/retail ops team** - Manage marketplace ratings and reviews.
- **Developer relations team** - Secure citations in datasets, GitHub, and research portals.

CONTENT EXPANSION

Next comes mapping the prompts and categories that matter, then creating and repurposing content to fill those gaps. Once new content is developed, it needs to be placed where AI engines are most likely to find and cite it. Syndication (which means republishing or redistributing your content on trusted third-party platforms and publications) ensures your brand shows up across the external sources AI relies on, making you harder to miss.

Action Items

- ☐ Audit AI answers for brand/category prompts
- ☐ Map how the brand is described externally
- ☐ Develop a “Prompt Universe” (100–200 likely prompts aligned with buyer intent)
- ☐ Create net-new content/pages to fill prompt gaps
- ☐ Apply structured markup (schema.org) for key entities: product, org, review, FAQ
- ☐ Repurpose earned media into structured blog content
- ☐ Syndicate content to Medium, Substack, and partner sites
- ☐ Atomize long-form content into Reddit posts, FAQs, and short pieces
- ☐ Monitor scraped and cited content across AI outputs

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Audit AI answers, map brand descriptions, build “Prompt Universe,” create and repurpose content, copywriting, syndication to third-party platforms, atomization of long-form content, monitoring for citations.
- **Web specialists** - Implement structured markup (schema.org) for key entities.

GOVERNANCE & RISK

Visibility without credibility is a liability. You have to ensure your GEO program is above board, compliant, and trusted, so the gains you make don't backfire.

Action Items

- ☐ Review community activity to ensure avoidance of astroturfing or undisclosed participation
- ☐ Review structured data and site practices to ensure avoidance of manipulative or hidden content
- ☐ Disclose affiliations clearly in all reviews and mentions
- ☐ Define and enforce policies for AI-generated content (disclosure and quality checks)

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Develop and recommend policies for ethical GEO practices, train teams on disclosure standards, review community participation approaches.
- **Legal counsel (client-side or partner)** - Review disclosure language, validate AI content policies, ensure compliance with regulations.

ONGOING VISIBILITY REPORTING

AI search moves fast. With regular monitoring and iteration, you must track how your visibility shifts, spot risks early, and adjust strategy to keep ahead of competitors.

Action Items

- ❑ Ongoing Scrunch-powered monitoring of visibility across previously defined AI engines
- ❑ Monthly/quarterly reports tied to baseline metrics from Phase Two, sharing insights and actions, including:
 - Updated competitive benchmarking across agreed prompt sets
 - Sentiment and narrative reviews to catch tone or accuracy shifts
 - Tracking changes in citation frequency after PR pushes and campaigns
 - And more (additional features are added regularly)
- ❑ UTM tagging/reporting to connect visibility gains to downstream performance
- ❑ Monitoring of retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) bot activity (via Scrunch, Tollbit, others)

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Scrunch reporting and monitoring, analysis of visibility and sentiment, competitor benchmarking, strategic recommendations.
- **Web specialists** - Implement UTM tagging, update tracking pixels, ensure analytics integrations, connect GEO data with broader dashboards (Google Analytics, CRM, etc.), and deploy/manage TollBit (or equivalent) for raw RAG bot crawl monitoring.

STAYING AHEAD OF AI SHIFTS

Algorithms, models, legislation, and features change constantly, and new behaviors like AI shopping integrations and agentic AI are already reshaping how people search and buy. GEO is not a one-and-done fix. The real ROI comes from staying agile, spotting shifts early, and adjusting so your brand isn't just keeping up, but staying one step ahead.

Action Items

- ❑ Regular horizon scans of AI engine updates, model releases, and new features
- ❑ Rapid response recommendations tied to algorithm or feature changes
- ❑ Proactive adjustments to content, authority, and monitoring strategies as needed
- ❑ Ongoing intelligence on AI-driven e-commerce integrations (e.g., ChatGPT Shopping, Instacart, agentic assistants)
- ❑ Continuous assessment of monitoring and optimization tools (e.g., Scrunch, Evertune) alongside new platforms that may deliver stronger visibility, benchmarking, or reporting
- ❑ Ongoing monitoring of legislation and regulatory changes that could impact AI visibility, content use, or compliance
- ❑ Briefings for client stakeholders on key risks, opportunities, and competitive moves

RESPONSIBILITIES & RESOURCING

- **PR Agency** - Trend monitoring, tool assessment, strategic analysis, rapid-response recommendations, legislation watch, client briefings, integration into ongoing GEO phases.
- **Web specialists** - Maintain and validate schema markup across the site. Responsibilities include regular ongoing testing and updates as Google revises schema requirements, ensuring continued compliance and visibility in AI search outputs.
- **Specialist partners (as needed)** - Legal/regulatory experts for AI legislation, technical consultants for marketplace or agentic AI integrations.

READY TO FUTURE- PROOF YOUR BRAND?

Brands that commit to GEO aren't just playing defense against disappearing organic traffic. They're securing influence via the new front door of the internet, where AI engines decide what buyers see and trust. The landscape will only get more complex as agentic AI, AI shopping integrations, and new models reshape how people search and buy. The brands that move now will define the playbook everyone else scrambles to follow.

Don't wait to play catch-up. Claim your edge with Proper Propaganda, a leading PR and GEO agency helping technology companies win attention and grow through classic PR, performance PR, influencer partnerships, and GEO for stronger AI-driven visibility.

PROPER PROPAGANDA'S AI SEARCH (GEO) PROGRAM

AI models are the new gatekeepers of discovery. If they don't see you, they don't recommend you. We monitor your visibility and ensure relevant AI engines know your brand, cite your wins, and pull your answers into conversations that matter to your company and customers.

Start the conversation with us:

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