



# The New Search Engine

## What you need to do to stay discoverable by AI

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For years, search was simple: buyers typed keywords into Google, skimmed a list of links and clicked through websites. That era is ending. According to SearchEngineLand.com, 37% of buyers now start searching with artificial intelligence (AI) instead of Google, which means tools like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot are becoming go-tos for buyers who want quick answers.

This shift is more than a trend. It is a visibility shift. If AI engines do not understand your business, they will not recommend you. And if they do not recommend you, your competitors will gladly take that spot.

So, what can you do about it? In this article, I will break down what is changing and then discuss what you need to do to stay discoverable.

### The Shift From Links to Answers

Buyers are not searching the old way anymore. They are asking AI questions like:

- “What’s the best managed print provider near me?”
- “How do I reduce downtime in my office?”
- “Who can help me modernize my document workflow?”

AI engines do not show 10 blue links like traditional search engines. They respond with single, synthesized answers, which is why buyers prefer them. They choose the most clear, trustworthy source and present it as the recommendation. This is great for the user, but not always great for businesses.

This means your visibility now depends on how well AI can interpret your digital presence, not how well you rank on Google alone. If your content is vague, outdated or unclear, AI engines simply skip you.

### Why Your Digital Presence Matters

AI engines do not “guess” what your business does. They pull from what they can understand, trust and verify. If your website, Google Business Profile and online content (this includes social media) do not clearly communicate who you are and why you are credible, AI will not push your content and brand.

For office technology dealerships, where services often sound similar across competitor companies, clarity becomes a differentiator. If your competitor explains its services more clearly, AI will choose it over your company — not because it is better, but because its website is easier to understand.



### The New Rules of Being Discoverable

**Rule No. 1: Be clear about who you are and what you do.** AI engines do not respond well to jargon or fluffy marketing language. They need simple, direct explanations of what services your company offers, who it serves and where it operates.

If your homepage says your company “empowers digital transformation through innovative solutions,” AI has no idea what that means. But if it says you “provide managed print, office technology and workflow automation for businesses in [City],” AI can use that.

**Rule No. 2: Answer real questions your buyers ask.** AI prioritizes content that mirrors natural, conversational questions. That means your website should include short, helpful explanations, FAQ sections and “How it works” breakdowns. Think about the questions your sales team members hear every week. Those should be written on your website in plain language.

**Rule No. 3: Strengthen your trust signals.** AI engines look for proof that you are legitimate and credible. They scan for case studies, testimonials, industry experience, consistent business information and a clear, authoritative “About Us” page. If your “About Us” page is two sentences long and your case studies are outdated — or worse, nonexistent — it will assume you are not a strong recommendation.

**Rule No. 4: Organize your content so AI can follow it.** AI reads structure. It understands headings, short paragraphs, clear sections and focused pages. If your website is cluttered, confusing or trying to cover too many topics on one page, it cannot extract real meaning and you lose visibility.

### Your Website Is Your Home Base

Even in an AI-first world, your website remains the source of truth. AI checks it for clarity, credibility and accuracy. A modern, fast, mobile-friendly site signals professionalism and reliability.

For office technology companies, this is especially important. Buyers are evaluating you for reliability, uptime and support. A slow or outdated website sends the wrong message. Your service pages should be accurate, up-to-date and easy to understand.

### Your Google Business Profile Still Matters

AI engines use your company’s Google Business Profile to confirm your legitimacy. They look at your reviews, photos, updated business information, service areas and categories.

For businesses, this profile is often the deciding factor in whether Google recommends you for “near me” searches.

### Content That AI Loves

AI engines reward content that is helpful, valuable, human-sounding, clear and practical. They prefer real examples, stories, definitions and step-by-step explanations. They do not reward keyword stuffing or vague marketing copy. If your content solves a real problem, AI will surface it. If it sounds like it was written for a brochure, it is more likely to ignore it.

### Next Steps

Here is where CEOs and business leaders should focus:

- Audit your company’s website for clarity, accuracy and outdated content.
- Add FAQ sections to your core service pages.
- Refresh your Google Business Profile with new photos, reviews and updated details.

In the age of AI-powered discovery, being “findable” is not about gaming algorithms — it is about being clear, credible and easy to understand.

- Create “pillar pages” that clearly explain your core services.

- Strengthen your brand story so AI engines understand your expertise.

### The Bottom Line

Companies that adapt now will be the ones AI recommends. In the age of AI-powered discovery, being “findable” is not about gaming algorithms — it is about being clear, credible and easy to understand.

The businesses that embrace this shift will win more visibility, more trust and more opportunities. The ones that do not will quietly disappear from the answers buyers see. ■

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