



3 ways to win in the age of AI search

How customer experience influences AI recommendations





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AI search is the new front door to your brand

Let's start with a scenario we're all familiar with...

A buyer asks an AI search engine a simple question: 'Which companies are the best in this category?'

Within seconds, the system produces a short answer and a shortlist. It's convincing and decisive: it summarizes patterns, references sentiment, and condenses thousands of lived experiences into a recommendation that most users accept without much further digging. This is the zero-click shift.

Today, over 58% of consumers report using generative AI tools instead of traditional search engines when seeking product or service recommendations¹, while roughly 80% of searches that trigger Google AI Overview results now end without a click to an external site².

The reality of the modern buyer journey is that AI search now sits between businesses and their buyers.



How customer experience shapes AI recommendations

What does it mean for businesses when AI engines are answering questions and buyers are making decisions before a click ever happens?

How do you navigate an environment where you're being chosen or excluded before buyers even visit your website?

In the world of AI search, the strategic challenge changes. It's no longer about traffic. It's about visibility and influence in moments you don't control.

★ How AI search works

AI systems don't evaluate brand claims the same way people do. They look for patterns and surface information that's consistent and corroborated. They care less about your positioning statement than they do about accumulated evidence.

So the version of your businesses that appears in AI-generated summaries over time is shaped less by what you say about yourself and more by what customers consistently experience. And here's the TL;DR...

In the age of AI, human experience is your most powerful asset.

Why human experience matters

When customer experience stops being a post-purchase metric and starts directly affecting how your businesses is first encountered in AI-generated responses, two things are true:

- 01 Strong, consistent feedback increases visibility and reinforces confidence.**
- 02 Inconsistent or fragmented experience decreases visibility and lowers confidence.**

As researchers from Columbia, Yale and the University of Chicago found, what's important is not just to have good reviews, but to have lots of good reviews³.

Products with both high ratings and high review volumes get the strongest preference boost from AI agents. It's the compound effect that drives selection.

This reframes customer experience as a strategic lever for brand visibility and differentiation, not just satisfaction. It's why trusted reviews play such a critical role in AI search. And why platforms like Trustpilot matter even more now.

3 things AI search needs to find your business

So how do you show up in AI recommendations when you're not there to speak up for yourself? AI systems look for patterns across large volumes of real customer experience and surface what appears most credible, consistent and current. Three things consistently shape whether a business appears in AI-generated recommendations...

01 Relevance

High-authority sentiment provides the context AI needs to match your business to the right user intent.

Ask yourself

- Do our reviews reflect the categories and services we want to be known for?
- Do customers consistently highlight the strengths that set us apart?
- Would someone reading our reviews understand why customers choose us?

02 Ranking

Consistent, quality human signals establish the credibility required to be the top-cited answer.

Ask yourself

- Do we have enough strong reviews to stand out from competitors?
- Are our ratings consistently high across a large volume of feedback?
- Are we actively encouraging satisfied customers to share reviews?

03 Recency

AI systems prioritize constantly refreshing, real-time data to ensure answers are current.

Ask yourself

- How recent is the feedback customers see when they search for us?
- Does our latest feedback reflect the experience we deliver today?
- Are new reviews appearing regularly enough to keep our profile current?

Businesses that generate strong, consistent and visible experience signals will be the ones that consumers see when they ask AI search tools for recommendations.

Why Trustpilot matters in AI search

Trustpilot turns authentic human sentiment into the signals that AI search needs to recommend your business.

Generative AI prioritizes information that is current, consistent and independently verified. Trustpilot provides exactly that: a dynamic, structured source of real customer feedback that AI systems can interpret and reference when summarizing companies for buyers.

In a world where discovery increasingly happens through AI-generated answers, verified human experience plays a critical role in how businesses are surfaced and recommended.

Trustpilot helps ensure that experience is visible, credible and continuously refreshed, helping AI systems represent your business with confidence.

Visible

361m+

reviews globally

Consistent

137m+

monthly active users

Fresh

190k+

new reviews daily

Learn how to stand out in AI search.

1 Capgemini: 71% of consumers want generative AI integrated into their shopping experiences

2 Similarweb: Zero-Click Searches And How They Impact Traffic

3 Kantar: New study shows why AI agents shop like super consumers