



THE MARKETING GUIDE TO SEARCH
EVERYWHERE OPTIMIZATION

How to Get Found Everywhere.

Search engine blue links are dead. Long live the blue links. The game didn't end - it moved everywhere.

Let's Get Into It

*Eleven short chapters, one scorecard,
and a plan you can act on this week.*

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Welcome to How to Get Found Everywhere

Search engine blue links are dead! Long live the blue links!

The search game isn't dead; it's just evolved from search engine to search everywhere. Business owners, CMOs, salespeople, and average Joes are wandering around, wondering how to get their businesses mentioned by LLMs like Claude, Perplexity, and ChatGPT - because they know it's not a "nice-to-have," it's a "must-have."

2 of 3

Google searches end without a single click.

73%

of B2B buyers now use AI tools like ChatGPT and Perplexity in their research

61%

of the B2B buying journey is done before a buyer ever contacts a vendor.

That's why:

We offer How to Get Found Everywhere as a way to help explain what's happening and offer some ideas on how to maximize a search-everywhere strategy. Light on the jargon, heavy on the information. Plus, we create The New SEO Scoreboard to help you understand exactly what you need to do and why.

Let's get into it.

1

The Graveyard of Acronyms

*does anyone know what
these things mean?*

Listen, even we're confused by all the acronyms out there, and we've been doing this for 10-plus years.

AEO. GEO. LLMO. AIO. AIVO. AXO.

Holy moly.

Oh, right, and let's not forget the tried-and-true SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

The issue isn't that these acronyms are wrong. The issue is that they are confusing. Here's what we know: LLMs and AI have fundamentally changed the search game. These technologies answer questions before a viewer even sees a link to get to a website. Brand discovery happens without a click. In some cases, a purchase happens with a single visit to an LLM.

Wild.

Now more than ever, the chase to ensure your company, solution, or product appears at the right time and place is faster.

"The answer? Still SEO. The acronym didn't break. The scope got bigger."

Today, businesses and marketers must widen the lens from search engine to search everywhere. That's what we're going to talk about in this eBook - and do our best to leave you with actionable insights and direction to help you get found.

Search Everywhere Optimization is how we get buyers to find, validate, and purchase your solutions.

2

What Changed *(and What Didn't)*

keep the baby and the bathwater

Here's the good news: we don't have to throw it all away.

People still search. They are looking for answers. They still need to find vendors, validate decisions, and understand categories before they buy. The fundamental human behavior that made SEO valuable in the first place hasn't gone anywhere. **What changed is the infrastructure around that behavior.**

In the old days (four years ago), search was straightforward. You typed a keyword, got a list of links, and clicked your way to an answer. Google pointed. You followed.

Then AI changed the path entirely.

Today, tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity don't just point users to content - they synthesize it. They read the sources and write the summary. And increasingly, that summary is where the conversation ends.

210x

Google still dwarfs ChatGPT in search volume - even as 73% of B2B buyers fold AI tools into their research.

But even Google has changed how it presents information. AI Overviews now sit at the top of results for millions of queries, answering questions before a single link gets clicked.

What This Means for Your Brand

A prospect researching your category used to land on your website three or four blue links in. Today, they may form an opinion and begin trusting a company before a link is clicked because AI is summarizing the category, naming vendors, and setting expectations without a click.

That means two things:

Your content must be good enough to be referenced, not just rank. AI systems draw from authoritative, well-structured sources. Thin content, vague positioning, and keyword-stuffed pages don't make the cut.

Brand presence across the Internet matters more than ever. When AI systems evaluate whom to mention, they look at the consistency of information, the quality of external references, and the clarity of positioning across multiple sources.

The Part That Hasn't Changed

Here's the reality check: the fundamentals that made SEO work in 2015 still make it work today.

Technical soundness. Genuine expertise. Clear, well-structured content. Credible backlinks. Consistent brand signals across the web.

None of that went away. In fact, it matters more now because AI systems are essentially doing what great SEO always tried to do: surface the most trustworthy, relevant answer for a given question.

If your content was already doing that job, you're ahead. If it wasn't, the expanded playing field makes the gap more visible – and more costly.

"SEO didn't get harder. It got more honest."

3

A Quick Look

*at Traditional SEO vs. Search
Everywhere Optimization*

Let's look at the difference between Search Engine Optimization and Search Everywhere Optimization.

THEN

Search Engine Optimization

WHERE YOU SHOW UP: A list of blue links on a results page.

HOW YOU WIN: Rank higher than competitors for target keywords.

CONTENT GOAL: Match the keywords buyers type.

BUYER'S PATH: Query -> click -> land on your site to learn.

WHAT YOU MEASURE: Rankings, traffic, clicks.

THE WIN: A position on page one.

NOW

Search Everywhere Optimization

WHERE YOU SHOW UP: AI answers, forums, reviews, social, publications - everywhere buyers look.

HOW YOU WIN: Get referenced and cited as the trusted source.

CONTENT GOAL: Answer questions well enough to be summarized and shared.

BUYER'S PATH: Form an opinion inside an AI summary - often before any click.

WHAT YOU MEASURE: Share of voice, mentions, AI visibility, influence.

THE WIN: Being found, validated, and chosen across the journey.

4

The New Discovery Journey

or how people find you now

We're all old enough to remember when a prospect hopped on a search engine (Ask Jeeves, anyone?), typed in what they were looking for, visited a handful of websites, downloaded a piece of content, and then talked to a salesperson.

Easy to map, optimize, and measure. That linear path still exists, but it starts at a different point. Today's buyer – and it's practically the same in the B2C and B2B space – often begins with an AI tool, or is influenced by the AI summaries that appear below a search bar. When they start with an LLM chat, the questions tend to be broader. Then the AI synthesizes a response, occasionally names companies, and sets off to refine its answer.

A savvy user of LLMs will check references and either click a link from there or hop onto a "traditional" search engine to visit a website. Either way, they've developed a mental shortlist, are better informed about the questions to ask, know what red flags to look for, and, in some cases, have already made a decision.

61%

of the B2B buying journey is completed before a buyer ever contacts a vendor (Forrester) – and that number keeps rising as AI tools deliver comparisons that once required multiple site visits.

While reliance on LLMs becomes more of our daily lives – whether we're searching for a restaurant or a precision manufacturing partner – we still need validation of our research.

This is a crucial point for brands. Buyers validate in a number of different ways, from Reddit threads to LinkedIn posts to review platforms to peer recommendations. They are cross-referencing every LLM "opinion." So, brands **MUST** ensure their promise and message are clearly communicated across a number of touchpoints. A great website is important, but it's only part of the equation. If your company shows up in an AI summary but has no footprint in the communities where buyers go to verify, that's a credibility gap that costs you.

More often than not, when a buyer finally hits your website, the decision has been made. At that point, they are looking for confirmation. They've already done the category research. They know the terminology. They have a point of view. The website visit is a validation step, not a discovery step.

That changes what your website needs to do. It needs to quickly confirm expertise, speak to a buyer who already understands the category, and make the next step obvious.

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Content as a Reference Source

Do yourself this one favor: stop thinking about content in terms of keywords or long-tail search terms when creating content.

Instead, ask yourself if the content is genuinely useful enough for a human to share it – or for an LLM to cite it. This is the standard that brands must meet with every written word. It's a higher bar, for sure. And a better one.

The Shift From Ranking to Referencing

For years, content strategy was largely a keyword exercise. Find the terms your buyers use in search. Write content around those terms. Optimize the page. Watch the traffic come in.

That still works. But it's no longer enough. AI systems don't just scan for keyword relevance — they evaluate whether content actually answers a question with authority. They favor sources that are specific, well-structured, and consistent with what other credible sources say on the same topic.

In other words, they're looking for the same thing a smart buyer is looking for: content that knows what it's talking about.

What "Content That Travels" Looks Like

Content that gets referenced — by AI systems, by buyers doing research, by peers sharing links in Slack channels — tends to have a few things in common. It takes a clear position. Wishy-washy content doesn't get cited. If your piece hedges on everything and commits to nothing, it won't stick in anyone's memory, human or artificial.

It's specific enough to be useful. General overviews get skimmed and forgotten. Content that answers a precise question — or explains a specific process, or takes on a real misconception in your industry — gets saved, shared, and referenced. It reflects genuine expertise. This one can't be faked.

AI systems are increasingly good at identifying thin content dressed up with confident language. So are buyers. Write from what you actually know.

It's structured for clarity. Headers, logical flow, plain language. Not because Google rewards it (though it does), but because content that's easy to navigate is content that gets used.

It's content that travels.

A Word on Thought Leadership

Real thought leadership isn't a blog post that restates what everyone already knows. It's a perspective that only your company — with your experience, your clients, your hard-won lessons — could credibly offer.

That's what gets referenced. That's what gets remembered. That's what makes an AI system mention your company by name when someone asks who the credible players are in your category.

You can't manufacture it.

But you can commit to it.

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The Zero-Click Reality

some hard truth

There's a stat that makes a lot of marketers uncomfortable: nearly two out of three Google searches now end without a single click. When an AI-generated overview is present, that number jumps to 83 percent.

No website visit. No landing page. No conversion opportunity. Just a question asked and an answer given, right there on the results page.

Welcome to the zero-click world.

Before you panic, let's put it in context.

What Zero-Click Actually Means

Zero-click doesn't mean zero impact. It means the transaction happened differently than you measured it.

When an AI Overview or a featured snippet answers someone's question, and that answer includes your framework, your terminology, or your point of view – that's brand exposure. That's credibility transfer. That person now associates your thinking with the right answer, even if they never visited your website.

It's closer to advertising than traditional SEO. Except you didn't pay for it. You earned it by having the best answer.

The mistake is optimizing only for what you can track. Clicks are measurable. Influence isn't. But influence is often what moves a buyer from passive awareness to active consideration – and that journey is largely invisible in your analytics dashboard.

Where It Gets Complicated

Here's the tension: if buyers are forming opinions before they click, and AI is shaping those opinions, then your content strategy can no longer be built entirely around driving traffic to your website.

That's uncomfortable for a few reasons.

Most marketing teams are measured on traffic, leads, and conversions – all of which require a click at some point.

Zero-click visibility doesn't show up cleanly in Google Analytics. It doesn't map neatly to a campaign ROI calculation.

But ask your sales team what changed. Ask them how informed prospects are when they finally show up. Ask them how often a new prospect already knows your company's name before the first call.

That's zero-click working.

How to Think About It

Stop asking only "Did they visit our website?" Start asking "where else are we showing up, and what impression are we leaving?"

That means monitoring how your brand appears in AI-generated answers. It means tracking mentions across platforms, not just inbound traffic. It means caring about your share of voice in the places buyers go before they come to you.

It also means accepting that some of your best marketing work will never show up in a dashboard. That's not a reason to stop doing it. It's a reason to get better at telling the story of why it matters.

Zero-click isn't a problem to solve. It's a reality to optimize for.

7

What Search Everywhere Looks Like in Practice

a three-step approach to winning

We're all on the same page that search has changed, right?
Good. Now let's talk about what to do now.

Search Everywhere Optimization isn't a single tactic or a software subscription. It's a way of thinking about visibility – and then building a content and brand strategy around it. The work breaks down into three phases: Plan, Execute, and Measure. None of them are new. What's new is what goes into each one.

Plan: Know Where You Need to Show Up

Before you create a single piece of content, you need to understand where your buyers are actually going to find you – and where you’re currently invisible.

That means auditing your visibility across the full discovery landscape. Not just Google rankings, but AI-generated answers, industry forums, review platforms, social channels, and third-party publications. Where does your brand appear? Where does it not? Where are your competitors showing up that you aren’t?

It also means getting honest about your content. Not just whether it exists, but whether it’s good enough to be referenced. Whether it takes clear positions. Whether it reflects genuine expertise or just fills a page.

The plan isn’t a content calendar. It’s a visibility strategy. The calendar comes after.

Execute: Create Content That Earns Its Place

Execution in a Search Everywhere world looks different than it used to.

Yes, you still need optimized web pages, consistent metadata, and technically sound site architecture. That’s the foundation – and it still has to be right.

But layered on top of that is content built to travel. Long-form pieces that answer real questions with real depth. Clear, consistent positioning that shows up the same way whether someone finds you on LinkedIn, in an AI summary, or on a trade publication’s website. External placements that build credibility beyond your own domain.

The goal isn’t to be everywhere for the sake of it. It’s about being present and consistent wherever your buyer goes, reinforcing what they already think they know about your category.

One thing that doesn’t change: quality beats volume every time. Ten pieces of content that genuinely reflect your expertise will outperform a hundred pieces that just check a box.

Measure: Track Influence, Not Just Traffic

This is where most measurement frameworks fall short – and where the most important conversations need to happen.

Industry watchers report that only 22% of marketers currently track AI visibility, and fewer than 26% plan to develop content specifically for AI citations. That's an opportunity hiding in plain sight.

Plus, AI search traffic converts at 14.2% compared to Google organic's 2.8% – a 5x advantage. The buyers arriving through AI are more informed, more decisive, and more ready to act.

Traffic and leads are still worth tracking. But they're lagging indicators. By the time a lead shows up in your CRM, the real work of influence already happened – in an AI summary, a Reddit thread, a peer recommendation, a LinkedIn post someone bookmarked three weeks ago.

Better questions to ask: Is our brand appearing in AI-generated answers for our category? Are we being mentioned in the communities where our buyers validate their research? Is our share of voice growing in the places that matter, not just on our own website?

Some of this is qualitative. Some of it requires new tools and new habits. All of it requires agreeing, as a team, that visibility and influence are worth measuring even when they don't convert in a straight line.

The companies that figure this out first will have a meaningful advantage. Not because they gamed a new algorithm – but because they committed to being genuinely findable, credible, and present across the entire discovery journey.

8

What It Looks Like When It Works

a real-world example

The goal here isn't to brag. We want to show you what happened when we added content nuance to a client's plan after we started seeing traffic and RFQs from LLMs.

This particular client is a precision manufacturing company. Our digital team developed and executed content that delivered solid rankings and traffic. The digital presence and touchpoints reflect their expertise and are on brand. The fundamentals are strong.

Then we saw traffic start coming in from LLMs, and users were filling out RFQs.

This is what we call in the business "an opportunity."

We added content that traveled, meaning it was useful to people finding it on search engines as well as LLMs.

There's a difference. Content that ranks wins a position on a search results page. Content that travels gets summarized by AI tools, shared in industry communities, cited by peers, and referenced in the conversations buyers have before they ever run a Google search.

So, we started creating content specifically structured as a reference source. Clear definitions. Real-world applications. Specific enough to demonstrate expertise, plain enough for someone new to the category to follow. The kind of content an AI system would summarize, and a buyer would bookmark.

What happened?

The content started appearing in AI-generated answers for category-level questions. Prospects began sales conversations with specific questions rather than broad process questions. The education phase that used to happen in early calls had already happened somewhere else – in an AI summary, a peer recommendation, a third-party article.

Good SEO got them found on Google. Search Everywhere Optimization got them found everywhere else.

Today, that client continues to get traffic from both sides (as it were), but the content is more informative, engaging, and (most importantly) effective.

9

What Still Works

because it always will

Stop. Breathe. Learn. Go.

Every major shift in search (and marketing for that matter) over the past 20 years has caused some kind of panic.

We need all the keywords! My website has to look good on a flip phone! Why don't I have social clout?

Breathe, buddy. There's one thing you must get right, and it hasn't changed in decades: the fundamentals.

Here are the fundamentals that are crucial right now:

Brand Voice and Messaging

If your prospect engaged with your brand on the company's website, saw a LinkedIn post, and read an AI-generated summary, would it read like the same business?

For a lot of businesses, the honest answer is no.

And that's a problem that no SEO strategy, content calendar, or technology investment can fix. Because if your messaging is inconsistent, unclear, or indistinguishable from your competitors', you're going to lose.

You must get this right, right now.

Brand voice isn't a logo or a tagline. It's the consistent expression of who you are, what you believe, and why it matters to the people you're trying to reach. It's the reason one company's content gets saved and shared while another's gets scrolled past. It's what makes your positioning stick when a buyer is triangulating between three vendors that all look roughly the same on paper.

In a Search Everywhere world, consistency of message across every touchpoint isn't a nice-to-have. It's the infrastructure.

Before you audit your backlinks or overhaul your content strategy, get this right. Know what you stand for. Know how you say it. Make sure it shows up the same way everywhere someone might find you.

On to the nerd stuff (said with love).

Technical SEO: Still the Foundation

If your website is slow, poorly structured, or difficult for search engines to crawl, nothing else matters. AI systems, like search engines, favor sources they can easily read and trust.

That means fast load times. Clean site architecture. Proper use of headers and structured data. Mobile optimization. Secure hosting. Accurate metadata.

None of this is glamorous. All of it is non-negotiable.

Authority: Still the Currency

Links from credible, relevant sources still signal trust – to search engines and to AI systems alike. The mechanics have evolved, but the underlying logic hasn't: if reputable sources point to you, you're more likely to be considered a reputable source.

This isn't about link schemes or volume. It's about earning mentions and references by doing work worth referencing. Guest contributions to industry publications. Partnerships with credible organizations. PR that places your expertise in front of the right audiences.

Authority is built slowly and lost quickly. Treat it accordingly.

Consistency: Still Underrated

One of the least exciting but most important factors in how AI systems evaluate your brand is consistency.

Does your name, address, and contact information appear the same way across every platform? Does your positioning say the same thing on your website, your LinkedIn page, your Google Business Profile, and in third-party directories? Are you described the same way everywhere someone might look?

Inconsistency creates doubt. Consistency creates trust.

Expertise: Still Impossible to Fake

This one deserves to be said plainly.

There is no shortcut to being genuinely good at what you do and communicating it clearly. AI-generated content that says nothing, blog posts that restate the obvious, positioning that could apply to any company in any industry – none of it works as well as it used to, and it's going to work even less as AI systems get better at distinguishing real expertise from the appearance of it.

The best SEO strategy has always been to actually know your stuff and find smart ways to show it. That's still true. It's just more true now.

10

The New SEO Scorecard

nine questions... you can do this

Not sure about you, but homework has never been our favorite thing. Here's a simple set of questions that will help you understand where your business stands in the Search Everywhere landscape and where you can improve.

Ready, set? Let's go.

Answer each question honestly. Choose the number that best reflects where you are today – not where you want to be.

01. BRAND VOICE & MESSAGING

How clearly defined is your brand voice?

- ☐ 1 We've never formally defined it
- ☐ 2 It exists in someone's head but isn't documented
- ☐ 3 We have guidelines, but they aren't consistently followed
- ☐ 4 It's documented, and most of the team uses it
- ☐ 5 It's documented, followed, and shows up consistently everywhere

How differentiated is your messaging from competitors?

- ☐ 1 We sound pretty much like everyone else in our category
- ☐ 2 We have some unique elements, but nothing distinct
- ☐ 3 We're somewhat differentiated but could go further
- ☐ 4 Our positioning is clear and mostly distinct
- ☐ 5 Anyone in our category would immediately know this is us

03. SEARCH & VISIBILITY

How well do you understand your current search visibility?

- ☐ 1 We don't track it
- ☐ 2 We check Google rankings occasionally, but nothing systematic
- ☐ 3 We monitor rankings but not AI or alternative platforms
- ☐ 4 We track search performance across Google and some other platforms
- ☐ 5 We have a clear picture of visibility across search, AI, and discovery platforms

Have you searched for your brand or category in AI tools?

- ☐ 1 No
- ☐ 2 Once or twice out of curiosity
- ☐ 3 Yes, and we know roughly where we stand
- ☐ 4 Yes, and we're actively working to improve our presence
- ☐ 5 Yes, and it's part of how we measure visibility

05. MEASUREMENT

How well do you measure brand visibility and influence?

- ☐ 1 We don't, really
- ☐ 2 We look at traffic but not much else
- ☐ 3 We track some metrics, but nothing tied to visibility or influence
- ☐ 4 We have a basic framework for measuring beyond traffic
- ☐ 5 We actively track share of voice, mentions, and brand presence alongside traditional metrics

02. CONTENT

Rate the quality and depth of your current content

- ☐ 1 Thin, infrequent, or mostly keyword-driven
- ☐ 2 Decent but generic – nothing that couldn't have been written by anyone
- ☐ 3 Some strong pieces mixed with filler
- ☐ 4 Consistently useful and reflects our expertise
- ☐ 5 We're regularly cited, shared, and referenced by others

How consistent is your publishing cadence?

- ☐ 1 We publish when we get around to it
- ☐ 2 A few times a year at best
- ☐ 3 Monthly or so, but inconsistently
- ☐ 4 Regular cadence with occasional gaps
- ☐ 5 Consistent, planned, and tied to a strategy

04. AUTHORITY & PRESENCE

Rate your brand presence – mentions, backlinks, etc.

- ☐ 1 Minimal to none
- ☐ 2 A few mentions but nothing systematic
- ☐ 3 Some credible references but not consistent
- ☐ 4 Regular mentions across relevant platforms and publications
- ☐ 5 Recognized as a credible voice in our category by outside sources

How active is your brand beyond your own website?

- ☐ 1 Our website is essentially our only presence
- ☐ 2 We're on social but not very active
- ☐ 3 Active on one or two platforms
- ☐ 4 Consistent presence across several relevant channels
- ☐ 5 We show up wherever our buyers go to research and validate

your
score

Add up your
answers across
all 9 questions.

9-18

TIME TO BUILD

Roll up your sleeves, friend. Start with the foundation of brand voice and messaging platforms. Build out from there.

19-31

ROOM TO GROW

Okay. Those lower scores are fixable with the right strategy and consistent execution. Prioritize the areas where you scored lowest.

32-40

STRONG FOUNDATION

Good news: you're ahead of most businesses. Now it's time to extend that visibility everywhere your buyers are looking – before they reach out.

41-45

LEADING THE PACK

Cheers!

Now, where can you go deeper?

11

What to Do Now

whew. that was a lot

Let's turn this into action.

This Week

Search for your company and your industry in three LLMs (Claude, Perplexity, and ChatGPT are our favorites). Take notes. What comes up? Who gets mentioned? Is my company missing? This is your baseline.

Pull up your website, your LinkedIn page, and your Google Business Profile side by side. Ask honestly: does this feel like the same company? Same voice, same message, same positioning? If not, that's your first fix.

Read your last five pieces of content as if you're a buyer who just found you for the first time. Would you be impressed? Would you share it? Would an AI system cite it? If the answer is no, you know what needs to change.

This Quarter

Audit your external presence. Where does your brand appear beyond your own website? Trade publications, industry directories, review platforms, social channels. Map it out and identify the gaps.

Define or revisit your brand voice. Document it. Make sure everyone on your team and any outside partners are working from the same playbook.

Build one piece of content that genuinely reflects your expertise. Not a listicle. Not a keyword exercise. Something that takes a real position on a real question your buyers are asking.

This Year

Commit to consistency over volume. One strong piece of content published regularly will outperform ten mediocre ones every time.

Expand your measurement framework. Add share of voice, AI visibility, and brand mentions to the metrics you review alongside traffic and leads.

Find the communities where your buyers validate their research and show up there – not to sell, but to contribute

And if the list feels longer than your bandwidth?

That's an honest place to be. Most businesses don't have the internal resources to execute a Search Everywhere strategy while running everything else.

Farinella has been helping businesses get found and get chosen for more than 30 years. If you want a partner who thinks strategically and executes across brand, content, search, and beyond, then we should talk.

Find us at farinella.com



THE MARKETING GUIDE TO SEARCH
EVERYWHERE OPTIMIZATION

How to Get Found Everywhere.

Search engine blue links are dead. Long live the blue links. The game didn't end - it moved everywhere.