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What the
AI-search era
demands of

your
Discoverability
Strategy

The fast-forwarded version

“If an agent can’t instantly read, verify and select your content, you’re invisible.”

Conversational agents are driving the biggest change in the customer journey that we have seen in years. With AI search, large language models (LLMs) are now short circuiting the long, complicated process of finding information. Instead of clicking through a bunch of links, users get a quick, curated answer from the internet. Right now, this shift is hitting the Discovery and Consideration phases hardest.

As a direct result of this shift, your traffic is changing. Very soon, more visits will come from AI agents sitting between users and your site, and it represents a rapidly growing source of traffic. Like every transformation of this kind, companies that can quickly implement strategic actions will be the ones to emerge victorious from this shift.

While technical actions remain essential, the true battleground is data. Content is data. If an agent can’t instantly read, verify and select your content, you’re invisible. But here’s the simple truth: What the AI-search era truly demands is not brand-new. It’s just a faster and tougher version of best practices you should have been following all along. Clarity, authority, structure, consistency.

So where does that put us?

The required actions aren't new but the stakes are higher now.

If you adopt these strategic changes early, you'll secure a strong position and be ready for monetization. If you don't, your brand risks becoming invisible to customers.

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What is it?

It's a new way of searching, where AI reads the web and delivers the answer to you. Instead of browsing endless links, people now get one synthesized response, often with only a handful of sources cited.

■ WHAT IS IT?

Terms that matter most

SEO

Search Engine Optimization

GOAL

Rank higher on traditional search engine pages (SERPs)

PRIMARY FOCUS

Keywords, backlinks and technical SEO

OPTIMIZED FOR

Traditional engines like Google

CONTENT STYLE

Informative, long-form, keyword optimized

AEO

Answer Engine Optimization

GOAL

Secure featured snippets and voice search answers

PRIMARY FOCUS

Structured answers, Schema Markup and FAQs

OPTIMIZED FOR

Featured snippets like Google's AI Overview and voice search

CONTENT STYLE

Concise, structured, FAQ-based

GEO

Generative Engine Optimization

GOAL

Influence AI-generated summaries and answer boxes

PRIMARY FOCUS

Natural language, semantic richness, contextual content

OPTIMIZED FOR

AI platforms like Gemini, Chat GPT, Copilot, Claude, etc.

CONTENT STYLE

Conversational, fact-rich and conceptually connected

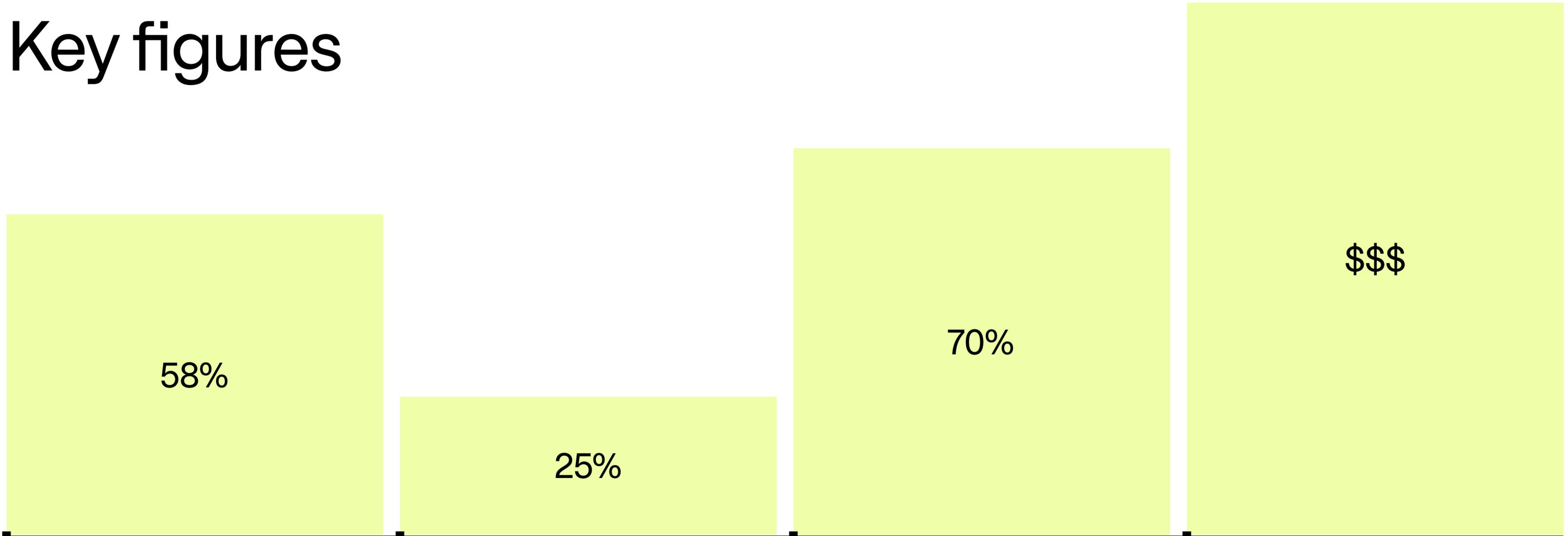
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Why it matters?

AI search has fundamentally altered how customers find and buy products. The rules of customer acquisition are changing, and these four key figures show exactly why you need to adapt now.

■ WHY IT MATTERS?

Key figures



Search behaviour is changing

58% of shoppers use generative AI for product recommendations (Capgemini). Queries are now longer and more complex questions, making simple keywords less important as AI handles nuanced, conversational input.

Traditional search traffic is declining

Gartner predicts a 25% drop in traditional search volume by 2026, while McKinsey more recently estimated that 20% to 50% of traffic is at risk.

The upper funnel is heavily impacted

AI is transforming early-stage research. According to McKinsey, 70% of AI-powered search users ask questions at the top of the funnel while they're still exploring a category, brand, product or service.

High-quality traffic will rise

Visitors arriving via AI search are often much further along in their buyer journey, ready to take action. In August, one in five of Walmart's referral clicks came from ChatGPT, up 15% from July.

3

What to do?

The time for observation is over. Visibility now depends on ruthless execution. Start by making sure your content is visible to AI, trusted by external voices and memorable for the consumer.

■ WHAT TO DO?

Key actions

- [1] START WITH A GEO AUDIT
- [2] WIN REFERRALS
- [3] NURTURE BRAND PREFERENC
- [4] MORE CONVERSATIONAL
- [5] MORE STRUCTURED
- [6] ADAPT YOUR METRICS

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Move fast: start with a GEO audit

First, ensure AI can read, trust and cite your content. Adopting these optimization strategies (GEO/AEO) now gives you a significant edge. As competitors focus on traditional SEO, this triple approach will capture a wider audience and secure your market leadership for when monetization arrives.

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[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Think beyond your site: win mentions

An effective solution is a strategy as old as search: Digital PR. AI agents prioritize highly authoritative external sources, from publications and expert blogs to digital word-of-mouth hubs like Reddit, to validate answers. Your focus must shift to securing quality brand mentions and expert commentary on these trusted platforms to leverage their authority and drive qualified referral traffic.

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[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Upper funnel: nurture brand preference

If product options are equal in price and reviews after an AI review, the consumer's final choice will default to instinctual trust and familiarity. Double down on building recognition and trust across every channel: digital, traditional and word of mouth.

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[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Content optimization: more conversational

Shift your content from formal blocks to a natural question-and-answer style. This helps both people and AI agents. Follow Google's E-E-A-T principles (experience, expertise, authoritativeness and trustworthiness) so your information is seen as reliable and worth citing. There's no one-size-fits-all: make sure everything you publish stays aligned with your brand and its promise.

- WHAT TO DO?

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Content optimization: more structured

If AI can't read your content, it won't use it. Stick to structured data standards like Schema Markup and use clear HTML tags for specs and FAQs. This makes your information easy to extract, verify and surface in answers.

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Measure: adapt your metrics

Some of your old metrics are having a crisis of relevance since AI is now the middle manager of the internet. It's time to redefine them to better reflect success in the generative AI landscape. Try metrics that focus on brand visibility and effectiveness within machine-driven environments.

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What's next?

AI has transformed search and product discovery. The next phases involve the complete automation of purchasing, the evolution of platform business models and the shift of power towards major marketplaces.

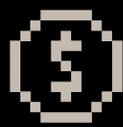
■ WHAT'S NEXT?

Key disruptions to watch



Lower funnel and the Agentic Era

The Agentic Commerce era is here, shifting AI from information to transactional execution. Autonomous agents now compare, decide and execute purchases (e.g., Shopify/OpenAI Instant Checkout). With buying moving directly into the conversation, the stakes are reaching a new level. And this raises the critical question: What is the strategic future for your proprietary brand website in this new era? This is precisely the pivotal question our team is currently exploring for an upcoming publication.



Monetization of AI search

One thing is certain: the big companies behind the rise of AI aren't going to leave any money on the table. To compensate for the decline in traditional advertising revenues, which are partially due to "zero-click responses," we can expect a rapid transformation of their business models. We'll likely see the emergence of new native advertising formats directly integrated into the responses generated by AI. In a future where you can pay to be cited, having consolidated a strong organic position could prove to be a very profitable choice.



Rufus by Amazon

Amazon has taken a protective "walled garden" stance, actively restricting external AI crawlers (Google, Meta) to safeguard its data and ad revenue. By prioritizing its in-house engine, Rufus, Amazon is creating an isolated, unparalleled shopping standard trained exclusively on its massive catalogue and proprietary data.

You refuse to become invisible? Let's connect.

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We're a Montreal-based digital and e-commerce partner focused on balancing short-term performance with long-term, sustainable growth. Our purposeful agility ensures every quick win is a building block for lasting value. Today, hundreds of clients have trusted our dedicated team of 60 full-time digital experts to achieve measurable success.

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