



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

# GEO Best Practices Guide



A Direct Digital Holdings Company

# Forward

For a great many consumers, the purchasing journey begins with an AI assistant. Shoppers turn to tools such as ChatGPT and Perplexity to find products, compare options, plan trips, and make decisions. This shift is occurring fast and it's reshaping how brands get discovered.

The challenge for marketers is simple. If AI engines can't understand what your organization offers, who you serve, and why you're a credible choice, your brand will not appear in the answers that large numbers of people rely on today. Traditional SEO remains critical, but AI systems need additional structure, clarity and meaning.

The DDH AI Council created this Best Practices Guide to help you meet that moment. We break down GEO to help you determine whether AI platforms can confidently recommend your brand. We explain why GEO matters, how AI systems interpret your website, and what practical steps your Orange 142 team can take on your behalf to model your brand correctly for AI discovery.

Discussions of AI can get very weedy very quickly, which is counterproductive to understanding the actions you'll need to take to ensure visibility in the AI web. Our goal for this Best Practices Guide is to provide marketing leaders with clear, approachable descriptions of topics such as entity mapping and content clarity.

If AI is the new front door to discovery, this Best Practices Guide helps you make sure your brand's name is on it, and that you're ready to welcome new prospects whenever they come calling.

## **About the Orange 142 AI Council**

The Orange 142 AI Council was founded to address a growing concern: the widening divide between organizations that embrace generative AI and those that are hesitant to adopt it. Generative AI is rapidly reshaping how we work, raising the overall caliber while enabling teams to innovate faster. We understand that for many business leaders, generative AI remains an unfamiliar technology with many risks. We aim to demystify generative AI and provide the education and insights business leaders need to build a roadmap for its adoption, with complete confidence that its use will be safe and transformative.

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# 1. The Purchasing Journey Now Begins with AI

The 2025 holiday season marked a turning point in how consumers shop. For the first time, significant numbers of shoppers turned to AI search tools, such as ChatGPT and Perplexity, to find deals, compare options, and make purchase decisions. [According to Salesforce](#), AI-assisted shopping will drive more than \$263 billion in holiday sales.

What does this mean for brands that sell via the Internet? To put it simply, the purchasing journey is changing. Rather than beginning with a traditional search or browsing a marketplace, the purchase point of entry is now the shopper's preferred AI tool. These tools allow them to ask a simple question, receive a curated set of options, and move directly into consideration and, if desired, purchase.

For a CMO, this shift has major implications. If consumers begin and end with AI, your brand needs to show up in the responses they generate. To do that, AI systems must be able to interpret your products, understand your services, identify who you serve, and retell your brand story accurately.

This is where Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) and Answer-Engine Optimization (AEO) come in.

- GEO ensures that AI engines can understand the entities that define your business, including your brand, services, audiences, products, and proof points.
- AEO ensures that your content is structured in ways that AI platforms can quote, summarize, and synthesize, so they can use it in response to user queries.

Together, these disciplines form the foundation of your website's AI readiness. They influence how visible your brand is in AI Overviews, how often and how well AI assistants recommend your products, and how successfully your story travels into emerging agentic buying flows.

If these concepts feel new, you're not alone. Many marketing leaders and agency teams are hearing about GEO and AEO for the first time. This guide is designed to walk you through the essentials: what they are, why they matter. We also describe how your Orange 142 team can help you apply them in practical and achievable ways.

## 2. The Core Concepts Behind GEO and AEO

<b>Entity</b>	A “thing” AI must understand clearly. This includes your brand, services, audiences, products, locations, and proof (case studies, testimonials, certifications).
<b>Entity Mapping</b>	This is the process of defining those entities, or “things,” and showing how they relate to one another. Entity mapping is a content and structure exercise, not a technical task.
<b>GEO</b>	This is the practice of organizing your brand and service information so AI systems can understand what you offer and who you serve.
<b>AEO</b>	This is the practice of structuring your content so that AI tools, including ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and others, can quote, summarize, and use it to answer user questions.
<b>AI Search</b>	This refers to when consumers ask an AI platform to find, compare, or recommend products or services.
<b>AI Overviews</b>	Google’s AI-generated summaries appear at the top of the results page. Brands with clear entities and answer-ready content show up more often.
<b>Canonical Definitions</b>	Think of these as your “official” descriptions of your brand, services, products, and audiences. These must be consistent, so AI knows which version to trust.
<b>Answer Blocks</b>	These are short, clear explanations AI can lift and reuse directly in its answers.
<b>Proof Entities</b>	This is proof that you offer good solutions so that the AI can recommend your brand. They include case studies, testimonials, awards, certifications, or press coverage, anything that helps AI validate your brand.

# 3. Why GEO and AEO Matter in an AI-First Journey

As a marketer, your number one goal is to ensure potential customers and travelers can find your brand or destination. Now that more people are choosing AI as their main tool for discovery, getting discovered requires you to make changes to your website. AI assistants don't browse your site like a human user. They don't scroll, jump between pages, or infer meaning. Rather, they rely on structured understanding.

To recommend your brand, an AI system first needs to be confident about a few things:

## 1. What your brand actually does

Your offerings must be modeled as clear “entities,” such as products, services, or solutions that AI can distinguish from one another. If they are vague or inconsistently named, AI tools struggle to recognize them.

## 2. Who your offerings are meant for

AI platforms look for the audiences you serve and the problems you solve. When these signals are weak or scattered across a site, your brand is unlikely to appear as a relevant answer.

## 3. Why your brand is credible

AI needs proof. Case studies, testimonials, awards, certifications, or other proof points that help the AI tool validate that your brand is a trustworthy recommendation.

## 4. How to reuse your content in its own answers

Even if AI understands your brand, it will not surface your content if it cannot easily quote or summarize it. This is where content structure matters. Clear definitions, answer blocks, and well-organized explanations give AI something to work with.

This is exactly why GEO and AEO matter.

GEO ensures that AI systems can understand the entities that define your business. It organizes your brand, services, audiences, products, and proof into a structure that AI can interpret.

With GEO, AI can correctly answer such questions as:

- “What does this company do?”
- “Who is this product for?”
- “What services does this organization offer?”
- “Which providers are best for my situation?”

AEO ensures that your content is written in a format AI platforms can actually use. It focuses on simple, direct, extractable explanations so that the AI models can quote and include them in their responses to users.

With AEO, AI can pull from your content when users ask:

- “Which solution should I choose?”
- “Which destination is family and pet-friendly?”
- “How does this service work?”
- “What are the benefits of this product?”
- “Who offers the best options near me?”

### **SEO, GEO & AEO: The Foundation of AI Readiness**

When your website is SEO, GEO, and AEO-friendly, AI platforms know exactly how to interpret your business and how to include you in the answers consumers see.

This clarity is essential for:

- Early-stage brand discovery
- Inclusion in AI Overviews
- Recommendations from AI agents
- Performance in PMAx and other AI-driven ad platforms
- Visibility within future agentic commerce flows

In short, GEO and AEO determine whether your brand becomes part of the consumer’s short list, or disappears from their decision-making process entirely.

# 4. What AI Gets Wrong Today (and Why)

## A Technical Approach to an Editorial Challenge

For many organizations, the natural response to AI is to route the challenge to the SEO team. The assumption was simple: if AI touches search, the solution must be technical.

That instinct is understandable. But it's incomplete.

Many of the problems AI encounters on brand websites stem from basic editorial failures, not technical ones. Vague or shifting service names, concept drift across pages, and unclear positioning create ambiguity, making AI systems hesitant to use a site as a source.

AI systems today need confidence to recommend a brand (more on that below). To gain that confidence, AI systems need to understand who the audience is, what they're trying to accomplish, what a brand offers, how those offerings differ from others in the market, and why the approach is credible.

When those answers are expressed clearly and consistently, AI systems can model the brand with confidence. When they're not, AI tends to exclude rather than infer. These are not schema problems. There are breakdowns in writing discipline.

Over the past decade, many websites moved away from explanatory writing, replacing it with pithy, brand-centric messaging. This shift works when people mostly skim websites. It fails, however, in an AI-driven environment. AI systems are tasked with interpreting, summarizing, and making recommendations. To do that reliably, they require concise, well-structured, and semantically clear writing. In other words, they require writing hygiene.

## What We Mean by Writing Hygiene

The amount of effective GEO and AEO work that is purely technical is more limited than many assume. Technical structure matters once the writing is done and done well. But no amount of schema markup can compensate for missing definitions, blurred audiences, or unclear value.

At its core, AI readiness depends on whether your pages explicitly and consistently answer a small set of foundational questions:

- Who are you talking to
- What problem are they trying to solve
- What do you actually offer
- How your services differ from alternatives
- Why your approach is credible

These are the same questions that high-quality writers ask during the creative brief process. When the answers are specific and consistently expressed across a site, AI systems can interpret and reuse the material with confidence. When they're not, technical layers cannot fully resolve the confusion.

This is why real GEO and AEO work starts upstream. It begins with language, structure, and intent. Technical solutions follow, to support meaning.

### **AI Confidence and the Hallucination Backlash**

So why do we keep talking about “confidence” and AI?

AI systems have always relied on confidence signals, but the required threshold rose sharply after early concerns about hallucinations. Early generative models were optimized for fluency. They were rewarded for producing plausible-sounding language, even when certainty was low. That approach became untenable once users, publishers, regulators, and platforms began documenting how often systems were confidently wrong.

As hallucinations became a reputational and legal risk, AI models were updated.

Today's AI systems are far more conservative about what they'll reuse, summarize, or recommend. When confidence is low, they default to omission rather than invention. Silence is safer than speculation. This shift makes writing quality decisive.

AI confidence today is not about tone or polish. It is about verifiability and consistency. Systems look for stable definitions across pages, explicit relationships between services and audiences, claims supported by concrete proof points (e.g., case studies, testimonials), language that can be quoted cleanly, and alignment between headings, body copy, and examples.

When those signals are present, AI can act with confidence. When they are missing, even strong brands are filtered out.

This is another area where many GEO efforts fall short. They assume AI needs more content. In reality, it needs less ambiguity. After the hallucination backlash, AI systems became far less willing to infer intent or reconcile contradictions. They require brands to do that work explicitly.

Here are common issues brands face:

Issue	What it Means	AI's Interpretation
<b>Vague or inconsistent service names</b>	If your services are labeled differently across pages, or buried under umbrella terms like "Solutions" or "Capabilities," AI systems can't tell what you actually offer.	"I see a lot of language, but I'm not confident about what this company does."
<b>Services that aren't clearly separated.</b>	When multiple offerings appear on a single page or share the same description, AI treats them as the same thing.	"These might all be variations of the same service, but I can't distinguish them."
<b>Unclear audience definitions</b>	If your site doesn't explain who each service is for, AI can't match you to customer intent.	"This company seems to serve everyone, or no one, not sure who this is relevant for."
<b>Proof points without context</b>	AI needs case studies, testimonials, and certifications to validate credibility. But when these aren't linked to specific services or framed clearly, the signals get lost.	"I see evidence of success, but I don't know what it relates to."
<b>Content that is difficult to quote or summarize</b>	Long paragraphs, brand-heavy language, and creative metaphors make it hard for AI to extract the essentials.	"I'm not sure what to quote here. Nothing feels like a clean answer."
<b>Outdated or contradictory content</b>	When old pages, legacy service descriptions, or conflicting messaging remain online, AI	"I see multiple definitions. I don't know which one to trust."

	has no way to know which version is correct.	
<b>Lack of internal structure and relationships.</b>	AI relies on internal linking patterns to understand how your offerings fit together. When those connections are missing, the brand map becomes fuzzy.	“These services may not be related, or maybe they are? Not sure.”

# 5. How SEO & GEO are Similar, & Why They Differ

SEO and GEO share a common foundation. They both focus on clarity, structure, internal consistency, and credibility. Both benefit from clean information architecture, thoughtful internal linking, and content that answers real questions. Neither works well when language is vague or contradictory.

But they also have some differences that must be accounted for when preparing a site for AI discoverability.

## **SEO Focuses on Retrieval**

SEO is primarily concerned with helping users discover your content. The goal is to ensure your website pages to be found, ranked, and ultimately clicked by humans searching for information. Success is measured in impressions, rankings, and traffic.

Thanks to this focus, SEO tolerates a certain amount of ambiguity. A page can rank even if its definitions are loose, its audience is implied, or its messaging shifts slightly across pages. As long as it matches query patterns and engagement signals, it can perform.

## **GEO Focuses on Interpretation and Recommendation**

GEO is concerned with whether an AI system can accurately understand, summarize, and recommend a brand or offering. The question is not “Can this page be found?” but “Can this brand be confidently described and reused?”

AI systems don’t browse, they model, and modeling requires stable definitions, explicit relationships, and language that can be quoted without qualification. Where SEO optimizes for keywords and queries, GEO optimizes for meaning and trust.

## **The Practical Difference**

SEO often succeeds by optimizing individual pages in isolation. In GEO, isolated optimization fails. AI systems evaluate consistency across the entire site. Contradictions, drift, or unclear hierarchies reduce confidence and suppress reuse.

This is why GEO places much more weight on editorial discipline. Writing hygiene, entity clarity, and internal coherence are not best practices. They are prerequisites.

# 6. Overview of Orange 142 SEO/GEO Services

Orange 142's approach to GEO and AEO is built around one core principle: AI visibility is earned through clarity, consistency, and credibility, not through isolated technical fixes.

Our services are designed to help AI systems accurately understand, trust, and reuse your brand's language across search, answer engines, and agent-driven discovery environments. That requires aligning editorial intent and technical structure into a single, coherent system.

Each component below plays a distinct role. Together, they form a complete GEO framework.

## **GEO & AEO Readiness Assessment**

We begin by systematically evaluating how well your site communicates meaning to AI systems. This assessment goes beyond surface-level markup to examine whether your brand, services, audiences, and proof points are clearly defined, consistently expressed, and structurally reusable across the site.

Using a structured evaluation framework, we identify gaps in definition, audience clarity, service differentiation, internal consistency, and answer extractability. The result is a clear readiness baseline that shows where ambiguity, drift, or fragmentation is reducing AI confidence and suppressing visibility in AI-driven discovery.

## **Technical Crawlability & AI Fetchability**

Once meaning is defined, we ensure AI systems can reliably access and interpret your content. This includes crawlability, rendering, indexing behavior, and AI-specific fetch considerations. Technical access does not create meaning, but without it, meaning cannot be used.

## **Entity Mapping**

Entity mapping is an internal modeling exercise we use to bring order and precision to your site's language. We identify and define your core brand, service, audience, and concept entities, then map how they should relate to one another before content is written or revised.

This map is not uploaded to an AI system. It is used to guide writing, structure, and internal linking so that AI systems consistently encounter the same meanings, relationships, and boundaries across your site. By ensuring that entities are clearly defined and used intentionally, we reduce ambiguity and make your content easier for AI systems to interpret, summarize, and recommend.

### **Named Entity Recognition Guides**

Named Entity Recognition Guides are editorial usage standards that define how key entities are referenced across your site. Much like brand style guides, they establish approved names, descriptions, and contextual cues for your brand, services, audiences, and core concepts.

### **Schema & Structured Data Markup**

Structured data is applied after entities and relationships are clearly defined. Schema reinforces the meaning that already exists in the writing. It doesn't invent structure. Used correctly, it strengthens AI confidence and supports accurate reuse.

### **AEO Content Development**

Our AEO content development focuses on creating pages with explicit intent. Each page is designed to answer a clear, defined question and communicate an unambiguous meaning to both humans and AI systems.

We develop using structured questionnaires that are tailored to specific entity types (e.g., service entities, proof entities), resulting in clean definitions, service explanations, and supporting material that AI systems can extract, summarize, and recommend with confidence.

### **Internal Linking & Context Reinforcement**

AI systems rely on internal structure to understand hierarchy and relationships. We design and reinforce internal linking patterns that reflect your actual offerings, helping AI systems build a coherent mental model of your brand.

### **GEO Validation & Monitoring**

GEO is not a one-time implementation. We validate how AI systems interpret your brand and monitor for drift, conflicts, or degradation over time. As sites evolve, this step ensures meaning remains stable and trustworthy.