

The Ultimate AEO Starter Kit

A Practical Guide for B2B Organizations to
Get Started with Answer Engine Optimization

Search is changing **faster than ever**

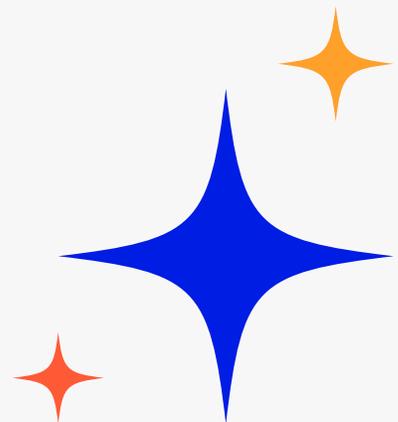
With the rise of AI-driven tools like Google AI Overviews, ChatGPT, Claude, and Perplexity, businesses can't rely on traditional SEO alone. These platforms don't just display links, they deliver direct answers, often citing just a handful of sources.

This starter kit is designed to help you understand what AEO (Answer Engine Optimization) is, why it matters, and how to start adapting your strategy today. Inside, you'll find best practices, tips, and a hands-on exercise to start building AEO queries for your own business.

This starter kit will help you:

- Understand **what AEO (Answer Engine Optimization) is**.
- Learn how **AEO differs from traditional SEO**.
- Explore the **principles** and **quick wins** that matter most.
- See how **conversational queries** evolve in AI-driven search.
- Practice building **AEO-ready prompts** using our Modifier Matrix exercise.

No matter your industry, this kit will give you the foundation you need to adapt your digital strategy for the age of AI-driven answers.



What is **AEO** & Why it Matters

Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) is the practice of structuring and presenting your content so that AI-driven platforms select it as the most credible and useful answer. While traditional SEO focuses on rankings and clicks, AEO is about ensuring your business is visible as the answer when a user asks a question.



Why It Matters

- Search behavior is shifting, users expect instant, conversational answers.
- AI-driven platforms like Google AI Overviews, ChatGPT, and Perplexity deliver results differently than search engines of the past.
- Being cited as an authoritative answer builds trust, credibility, and awareness even if the user never clicks through.

SEO vs. AEO: A Side-by-Side Look

Tactic	SEO Importance	AEO Importance
Structured Data/Schema	High	High
Backlinks	High	Low
Clear, Concise Answers	Medium	High
Conversational Content	Medium	High
E-E-A-T (Expertise, Authority, Trust)	High	High
Content Freshness	Medium	High
Brand Citations	Low	High

Check out the full matrix [here](#).

How do you balance strategy between traditional **SEO** & **AEO**?

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Don't abandon SEO best practices for shiny new trends. Instead, you should be layering AEO on top of strong SEO practices to avoid losing ground while gaining future visibility. Budgeting for AEO doesn't mean cutting SEO spend, it means allocating time toward AEO innovation. Allocate 80% to SEO fundamentals and 20% to AEO innovation. This ensures you maintain rankings today while preparing for tomorrow's search behaviors.

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Kyle Brigham
Chief Strategy Officer



The Growth of AEO

Answer Engine Optimization is becoming central to how organizations approach digital visibility. As AI-driven platforms rapidly gain adoption, AEO is evolving at a pace similar to the early days of SEO, reshaping how businesses think about content, discoverability, and trust online.

Key Stats & Trends



Integration Across Platforms

AI assistants are now built into search engines, browsers, and productivity tools, changing how users access and interact with information.



Impact of Google AI Overviews

These results keep users in the SERP longer and reduce clicks to traditional listings. Organic click-through rates drop from ~15% to ~8% when an AI Overview appears.



Adoption of Third-Party Tools

Platforms like ChatGPT and Perplexity are increasingly part of vendor and solution research. ChatGPT alone now has ~800 million weekly active users (2025), doubling from ~400 million earlier this year, and processes over 2.5 billion prompts daily.



Growth in B2B Traffic from AI:

AI-generated traffic in B2B is already 2-6% of organic traffic, growing more than 40% month-over-month, and forecasted to exceed 20% by the end of 2025. Two-thirds of B2B ecommerce organizations plan to increase AI search investment within the next 1-2 years.



Shift in Buyer Behavior and Readiness:

Instead of scanning lists of links, users are relying on conversational, AI-generated answers that feel immediate and authoritative. At the same time, only 36% of employees feel prepared to use AI effectively, highlighting a gap between adoption and readiness.



Why It Matters

For B2B organizations, this shift means buyers are relying less on scanning search results and more on conversational, AI-generated answers. If your content is not optimized for AEO, you risk being left out of the conversation entirely.

What trends are we seeing that indicate AEO is becoming **increasingly more critical** for visibility in AI-driven search?

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We're seeing clear signs that answer engine optimization is becoming essential for visibility. AI platforms are starting to interact with websites differently than traditional search engines. New protocols like `llms.txt` are being tested to help AI systems understand and prioritize content. We're also noticing that platforms like ChatGPT and Perplexity struggle with formats like PDFs and JavaScript-heavy pages, which puts a spotlight back on clean HTML and structured schema like FAQs. The biggest shift is in results. AI-driven traffic is growing quickly, and in our own marketing efforts, LLMs are already the second largest driver of new business leads. These tools are beginning to influence how people discover and trust brands, and we need to make sure our content is built for that reality.

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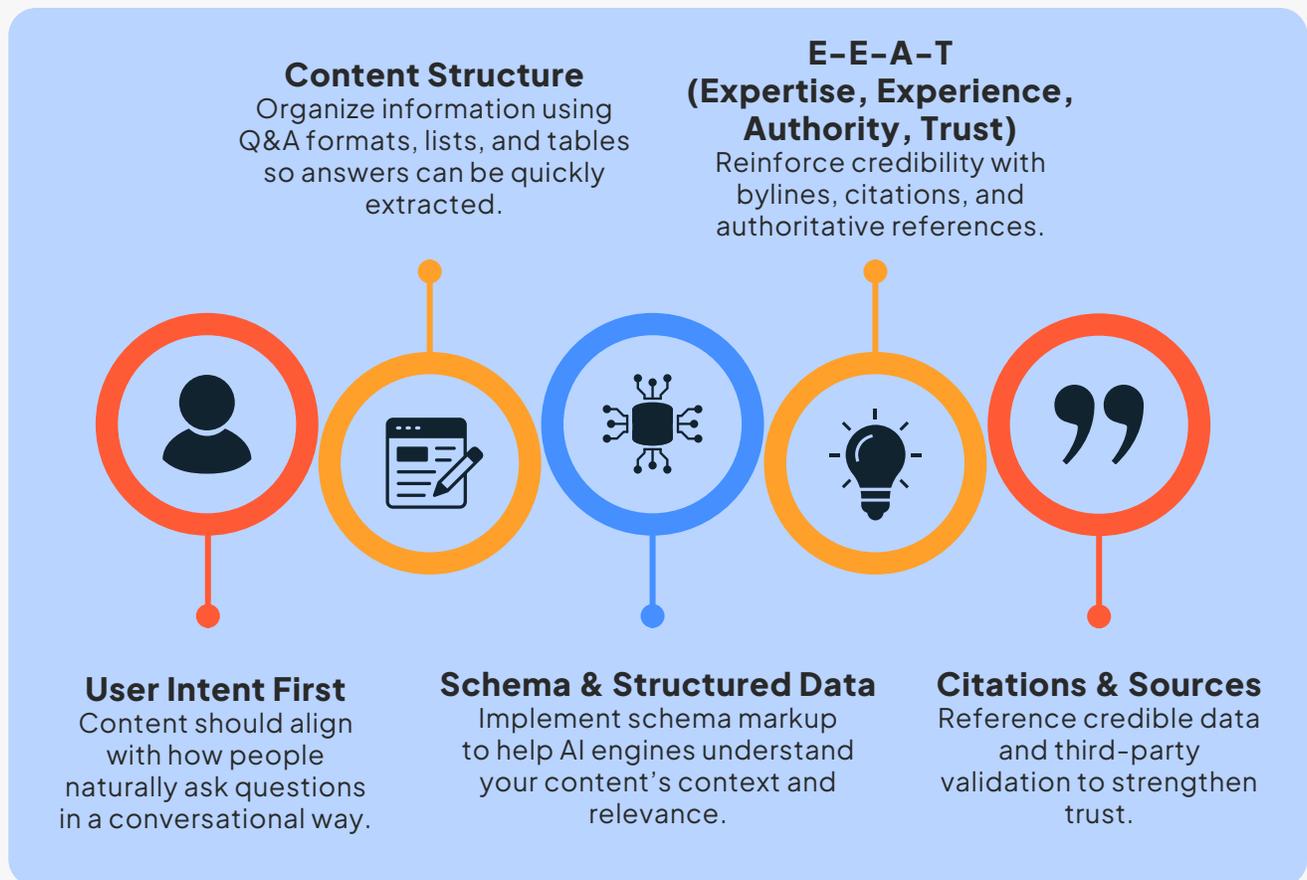
Joe Stoffel
Director of SEO/AEO



Core Principles & Quick Tips

Answer Engine Optimization requires a shift in mindset. Instead of optimizing only for search engine rankings, the goal is to make your content useful, structured, and credible enough to be surfaced directly as an answer in AI-driven platforms.

Core Principles of AEO



Quick Tips to Start

- Write answers in **short, clear statements** (2-4 sentences) that directly address the query.
- Add **FAQs** to high-value pages to capture conversational queries.
- Use **headings framed as questions** and provide concise responses below.
- Keep content updated so answers remain accurate and relevant.
- Use **internal linking** to guide readers naturally from one related question or topic to the next, reflecting how conversations typically progress.

How Organizations are Approaching AEO

Organizations are beginning to adapt their digital strategies for AEO by experimenting with new formats, content structures, and optimization methods. These early approaches offer a glimpse into how businesses can prepare for a search landscape shaped by AI-driven answers.

Common Approaches



FAQ Hubs

Creating dedicated FAQ sections that address conversational queries directly.



Schema Beyond the Basics

Testing advanced markup to signal context and relationships between pieces of content.



Prompt-Like Content

Using headers phrased as questions and delivering concise, clear answers underneath.



Conversational Flows

Structuring content so that one question leads naturally to the next, mirroring how users interact with AI tools.



Monitoring AI Mentions

Tracking where and how their content is appearing in AI Overviews, Perplexity citations, or other answer engines.

Key Insight!

Unlike SEO, where the goal is to rank for a keyword, AEO is about **anticipating the conversation**. This means thinking beyond individual terms and focusing on how queries evolve from broad exploration to specific, transactional intent.

The Modifier Matrix Workshop

One of the most effective ways to begin practicing AEO is by breaking down your offerings into conversational prompts. Instead of only targeting a keyword, you can layer in industry, modifiers, and persona/use case to generate questions that resemble how real users interact with AI tools.

The Modifier Matrix Framework

Base Target Keyword	Industry Modifier	Service Modifier	Persona Modifier	Example Prompt	Follow Up Prompt 1	Follow Up Prompt 2
Web portal development	Healthcare Systems (Hospitals & University Networks)	.NET	Internal Marketing Team	"Are .NET portals secure enough for hospital systems managing sensitive patient data?"	"What features should a large healthcare system include in a patient portal to balance security and usability?"	"Show me web development companies that build .NET portals for hospitals and healthcare networks."
SEO services	Healthcare Systems (Hospitals & University Networks)	Local SEO	Marketing Director	"How can hospital systems improve SEO so patients find the right care locations online?"	"Local SEO for multi-location healthcare networks"	"Who are the best SEO companies for healthcare system patient acquisition?"
Google Analytics consulting	Healthcare Systems (Hospitals & University Networks)	GA4	Data & Analytics Team	"How should a hospital system set up GA4 to track patient acquisition across multiple locations?"	"Can GA4 show ROI from physician referrals and marketing campaigns in healthcare?"	"Provide me with companies that help healthcare systems implement GA4 for accurate and



How to Use It

1. Start with a base service or offering you want to promote.
2. Add relevant industry, modifier, and persona/use case.
3. Translate the combination into a conversational query.
4. Evolve the query from initial prompt → follow up → transactional intent.

Workshop Exercise

Use the blank matrix below to try this for your own organization's services.

Fill in each column and brainstorm prompts that mirror how potential buyers might phrase their questions.

Blank Matrix Template

Base Target Keyword	Industry Modifier	Service Modifier	Persona Modifier	Example Prompt	Follow Up Prompt 1	Follow Up Prompt 2

How to Improve AI Visibility Today



You don't need a complete overhaul to start improving your presence in AI-driven search. These steps are simple, actionable, and can be tackled today to set your organization on the path toward better AI visibility.

Your AEO Quick Start Checklist



Identify Top Questions

Gather the 10–15 most common questions your prospects or clients ask. Rewrite them as conversational prompts to guide your content.



Strengthen FAQ Content

Review FAQ and service pages. Ensure answers are clear, concise, and ready to be extracted by AI tools.



Update Schema Markup

Add or refine structured data on high-value pages to provide AI with context and credibility signals.



Set Up an llms.txt File

Create this new standard file to signal how large language models (LLMs) can crawl and use your content, positioning your site to be part of AI training data responsibly.



Test in AI Tools

Plug your prompts into Google AI Overviews, ChatGPT, or Perplexity. See if your content shows up, and note how it's displayed.



Refresh Outdated Pages

AI tools prefer up-to-date sources. Audit older content and bring it current with fresh stats, insights, or examples.



Refine Internal Linking

Connect related content in a way that mirrors how a user might naturally progress from one question to the next.