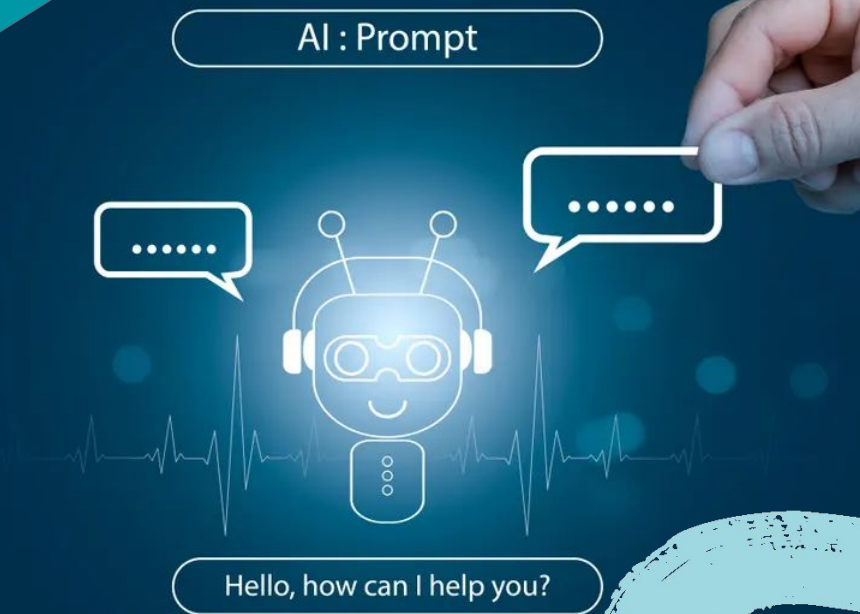


How to Stay Ahead of AI-Powered Search

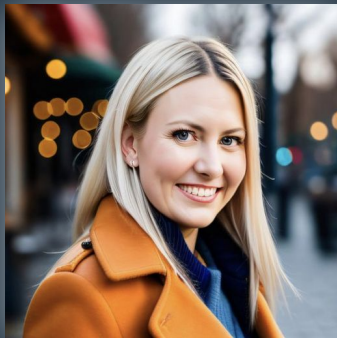
Set your brand up to win as rapidly evolving AI technologies reshape search and commerce

WPROMOTE

MMA
Marketing + Media Alliance



Experts in the House



Rachel Bucey Klein
SVP, Earned & Owned Media
Wpromote



Christine Schrader
VP, Strategic Innovation
Wpromote



Serena Peterson
Head of SEO
Wpromote

AI Search Rewards Systems Thinking

AI search has reached critical mass in months, not years. The companies building institutional muscle for this shift are enjoying compounding advantages while others debate whether to act.

The brands winning aren't just optimizing faster. They recognized they needed to **re-architect systems thinking** and acted fast.

Adapting Strategies for the Next Generation of Search

Competitive advantage requires coordinated strategy across all four areas, not isolated excellence in one.

Search behavior is evolving

83% of consumers trust AI search as much as traditional search & 18% now prefer AI for recommendations over other sources.

Zero-click search has disrupted SEO

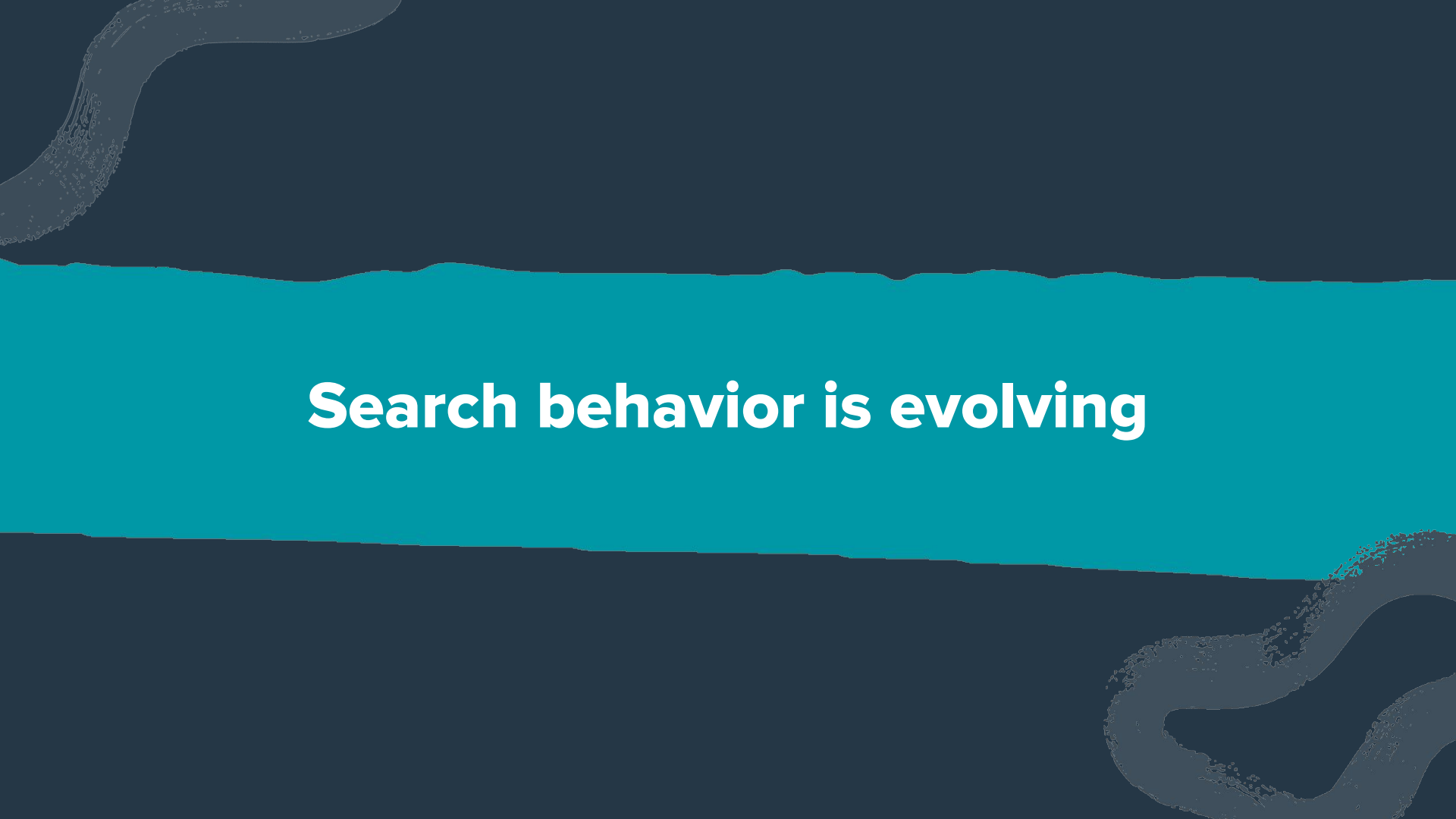
AI results synthesize answers from many sources. Citations and brand mentions now outweigh top rankings.

Organizational silos are a liability

AI sees one brand across all channels. Disconnected teams across SEO, PR, social, and product create contradictory brand signals.

You must measure what you manage

Using lagging metrics (rank, sessions) leads to misallocation. Resources flow to obsolete tactics while position erodes.

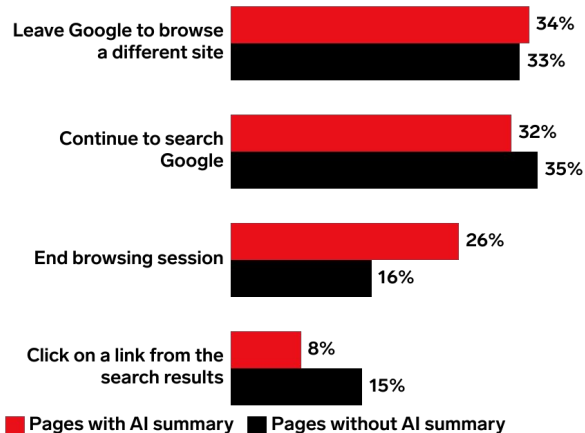


Search behavior is evolving

Organic Traffic Is Shrinking, Trust Is Shifting

This evolution translates into real performance impact

Search results with AI overviews result in less referral traffic



Note: based on 68,879 Google searches among 900 adults ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Source: Pew Research Center as cited in company blog, July 22, 2025

83% of consumers trust genAI as much, if not more

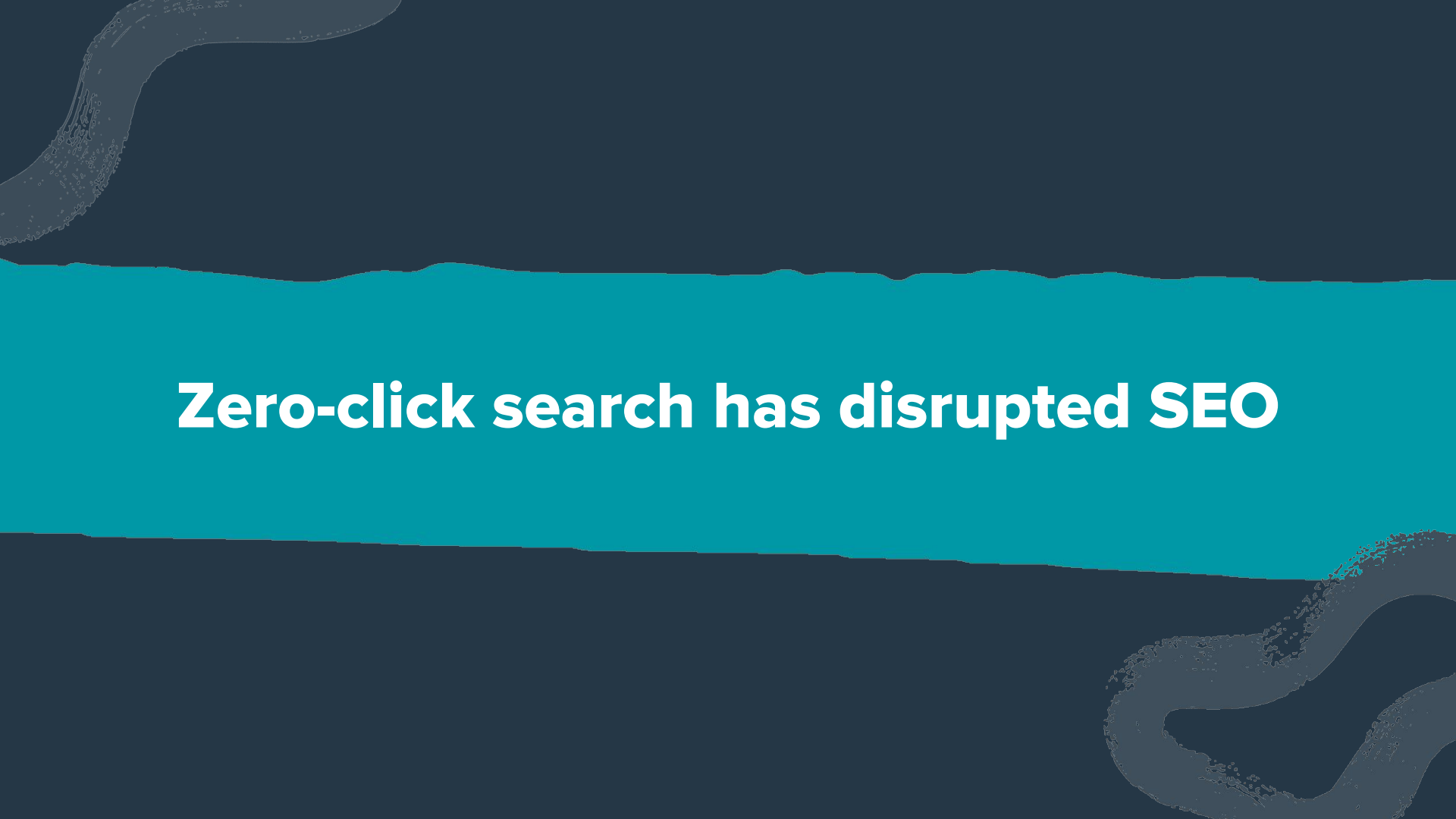


% of consumers worldwide, on whether they trust genAI over organic search results, Jan 2025*

LLMs are not just influencing user behavior. Users are trusting instant, synthesized answers over links



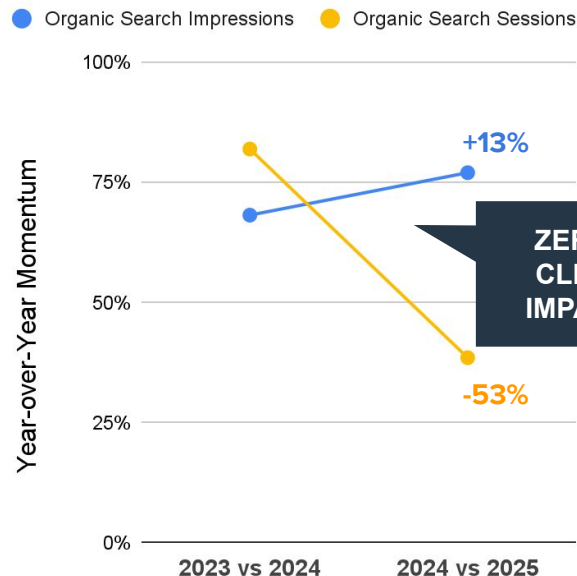
Note: n=5,000 ages 18-67; "trust more" includes responses for "trust a little more" and "trust a lot more"; "trust less" includes responses for "trust a little less" and "trust a lot less"; "Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US. Source: Attest, "Consumer Adoption of AI Report," March 4, 2025



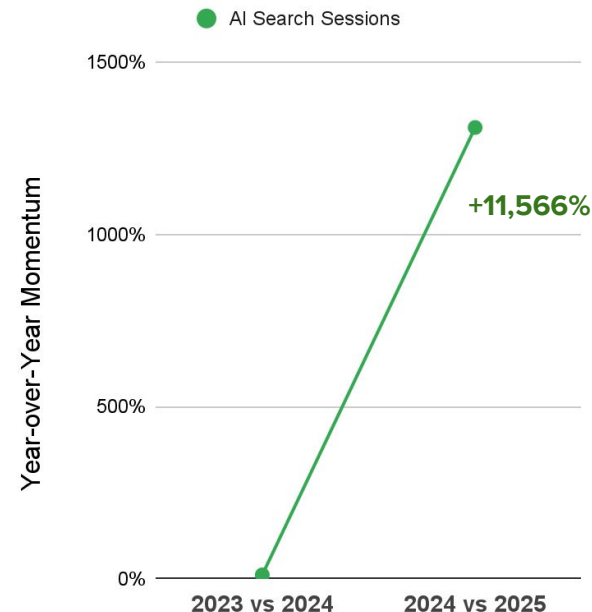
Zero-click search has disrupted SEO

Impressions Up, Clicks Down: The New Organic Reality

Impressions & Clicks Growth on Diverging Trajectories



AI Search Traffic Growing Exponentially



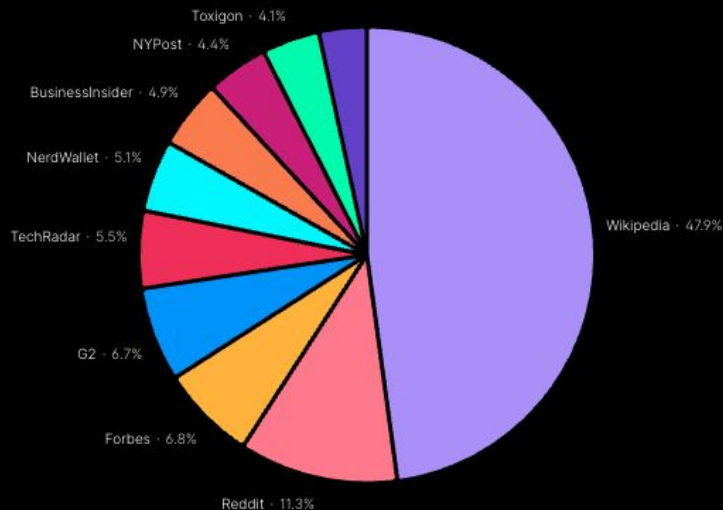
Clients who paired **non-brand SEO** with **brand-building** saw **2.75x more revenue growth** than those who didn't.

Organic Extends Beyond Your Owned Channels

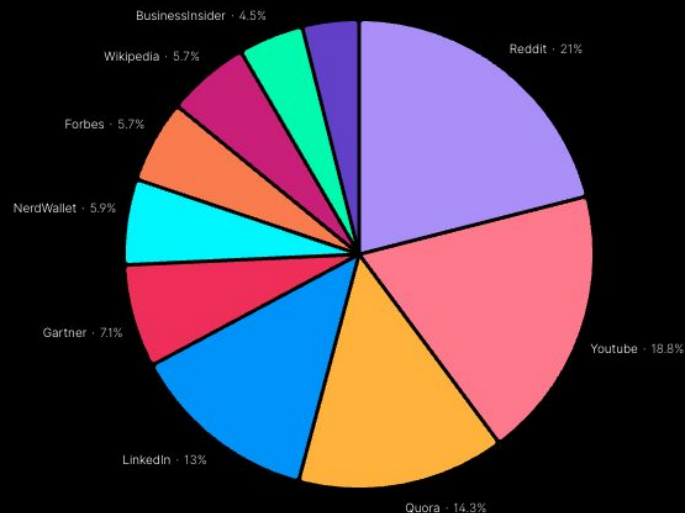
Brands with more web mentions are 3x more likely to appear in AI search results.

Building visibility through relevant mentions across publishers, partners, social platforms, and communities is no longer just about PR value, it's about search visibility.

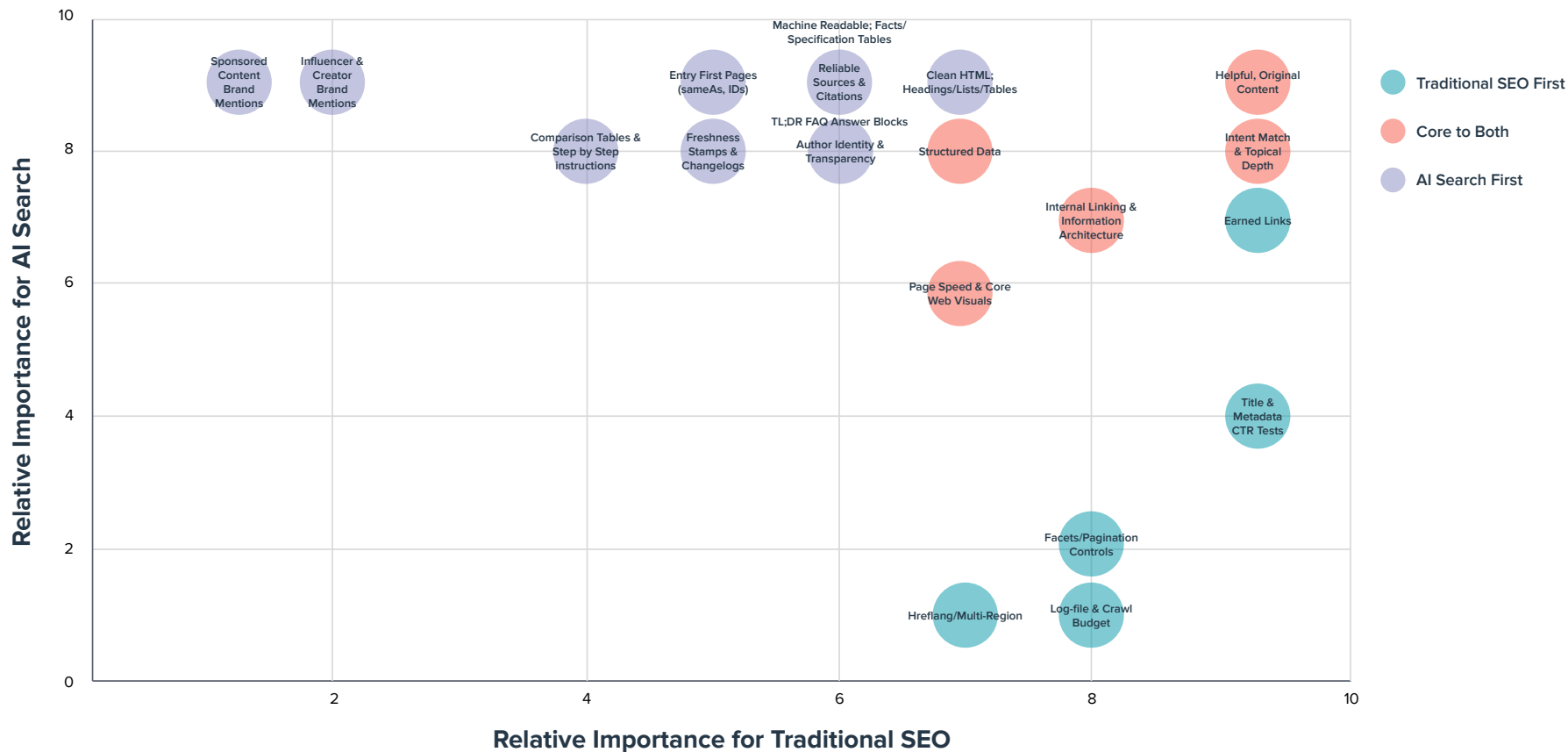
ChatGPT: Percentage Share of Top 10 Websites



Google AI Overviews: Percentage Share of Top 10 Websites

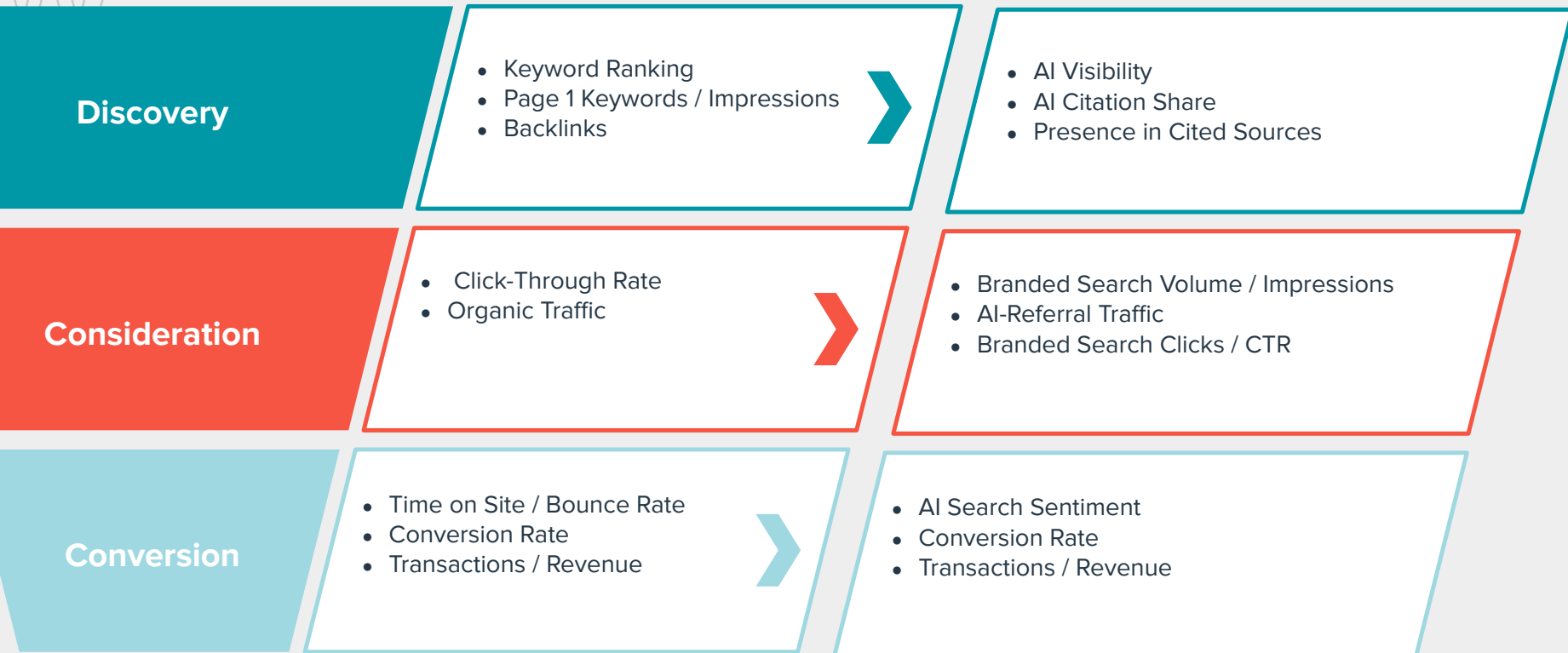


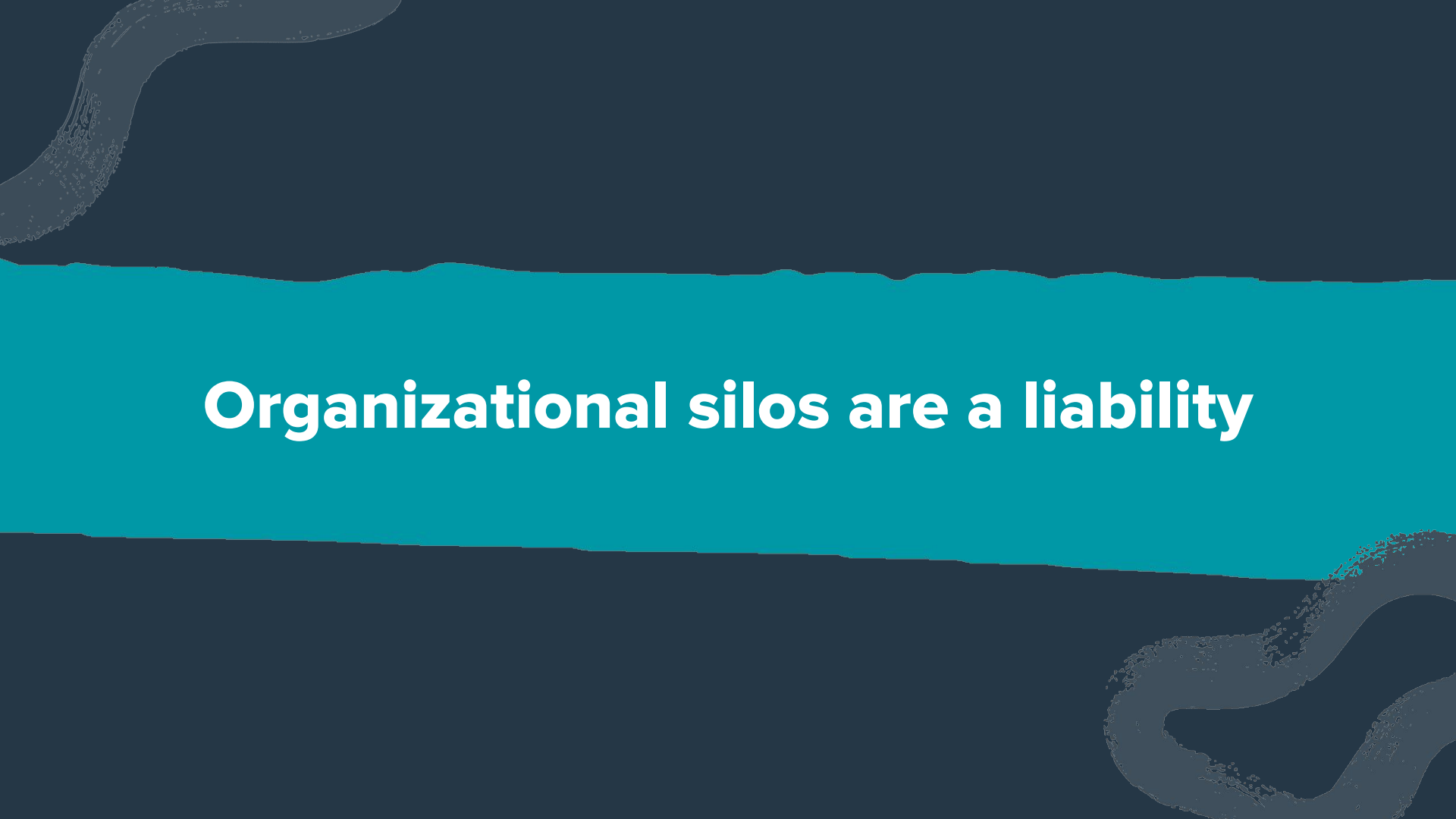
Evolving Signal Value Across AI Search + Classic SEO



From → To | Adapting KPIs for AI Surfaces & Zero-Click

Show up where it matters, even without the click





Organizational silos are a liability

The Silo Tax: How Fragmented Teams Lose to Early Mover Brands

Misalignment leads to misallocation of time, resources & budget

TEAM	KPIs	THE TRAP	IMPACT ON AI RESULTS
Public Relations	Media impressions and share of voice	PR teams that don't integrate AI citation data when building targets for PR dilute potential to grow brand exposure & mentions in Google AI results, ChatGPT, and Perplexity	→ Outlets targeted may not be sources AI trains on
Social Media	Likes, shares, engagement	Social teams that don't use citation data from AI monitoring tools and ignore proper use of deep links back to brand pages for crawling and citation growth limit AI visibility	→ If you're not strategically and consistently using highly cited AI sources, they won't drive brand mentions and citations in LLMs
Product Strategy/GTM	Post-click conversion	Product pages that are optimized for post-click conversion instead of pre-click discovery and not aligned with SEO; GTM launches planned without consideration for how AI will surface	→ AI cannot find or cite product capabilities because content is written for buyers who already arrived instead of using terminology users search for
Dev, Web, IT	Measured on uptime and sprint completion	If business priorities for SEO and AI answers are not prioritized or tech debt is an obstacle to machine readability for AI bots, the content cannot be properly cited by LLMs	→ Lack of implementation is a structural liability when AI rewards sites that are machine readable and updated consistently

Rewriting Your Playbooks

SEO

WHAT'S TRIED
& TRUE

AI
SEARCH

NEW TACTICS

SYSTEMS THINKING

OPTIMIZE FOR GOOGLE'S ALGORITHM

Ranking and traffic come from reinforcing loops: technical and non-brand keyword quality attracts traffic, traffic earns links, links boost authority, and authority improves rankings.

OPTIMIZE FOR CONVERSATIONAL AI ANSWERS

AI engines evaluate your brand presence and assets, including owned content, earned media, video, social presence, and product feeds. Authentic third-party citations make more of an impact than product-led promotional content.

Evolved Playbook for SEO & AI Search

Technical SEO Playbook

ARCHITECTURE & FEEDS Guide AI bots to content via sitemaps and internal links. Use GMC & Agentic Commerce Protocol for product tiles (ecommerce).

MACHINE READABILITY Use server-side rendering for core content so AI bots can crawl HTML. Reduce page load time. Set up IndexNow & LLMS.txt.

CONTENT RELEVANCE Use structured data. Format content for AI extraction with summaries, data tables, video, imagery, semantic headers hierarchy, bullet lists, and Q&A pairs for FAQs.

EXAMPLE GOAL: INCREASE AI-DRIVEN TRAFFIC & CONVERSIONS BY 25% BY X DATE

PRE-WORK

- Resolve JavaScript blocking AI bots
- Deploy LLMS.txt & IndexNow
- Implement schema (Organization, Product, FAQ, HowTo, etc) on top 50 pages
- Audit feed accuracy (ecommerce)

LONG-TERM

- Server-side rendering mandated across all priority content
- Schema deployment at scale (~80% pages)
- Real-time feed sync for agentic commerce
- Monthly AI bot traffic analysis & optimization

Unifying Silos

Coordination Governance: RACi & implementation tracking serve as centralized forcing function with documentation of completion, status, QA or blockers.

- **Public Relations** provides data tables and research assets for AI answers
- **Social Media** monitors AI sentiment and brand mentions, provides strategy for sentiment management (like FAQ pairs)
- **Product Strategy/GTM** defines schema and feed requirements, approves technical roadmap
- **Dev/Web/IT** executes implementation, removes blockers, ships weekly

Measure What Matters:

AI-driven traffic & conversions | Agentic AI Crawl Growth | Citation growth | Brand mentions & visibility | AI-driven traffic & conversions

Citation Playbook

AFFILIATES Make sure affiliate sites cite brand, specs, benefits, and link back to product/helpful content while being mindful of tracking CVR.

DIGITAL PR Build citation-worthy data assets. Use citation data to cull targeted journalists and pitch stories focused on proof points with accessible earned assets for publishers to review and deep link to.

INFLUENCERS Identify the 10-15 experts AI already cites. Co-create content that enforces brand mentions and inbound links.

EXAMPLE GOAL: BY X DATE, BECOME TOP-3 CITED SOURCE IN TOPIC CATEGORY

PRE-WORK

- Identify top 10 affiliates
- Launch one research report with strategy for Digital PR coverage
- Activate partnerships with 3 influencers AI already cites

LONG-TERM

- Scale to 20+ affiliate partners
- Enable quarterly research initiatives for Digital PR
- Scale up monthly campaigns with key influencers

Unifying Silos

Coordination Governance: Cross-team Citation Project Brief & RACi.

- **Public Relations** owns journalist relationships, outreach, and external content partnerships
- **Social Media** owns influencer identification, relationship management and content activation
- **Product Strategy/GTM** owns narrative development and messaging consistency for specs/benefits and plans for Affiliate conversion tracking
- **Dev/Web/IT** owns technical infrastructure and content publishing to support initiative

Measure What Matters:

Citation growth | Brand mentions & visibility | AI-driven traffic & conversions

Organic Social Playbook

VIDEO Create authoritative YouTube content (how-tos, product guides, tutorials) optimized for AI citation. Use transcripts and structured descriptions with links, then cross-post videos in social media for organic pollination.

REDDIT Monitor brand mentions and category discussions. Participate authentically in relevant subreddit communities. Use native Reddit ads to amplify authoritative content. Address misinformation holistically to improve brand sentiment.

EXAMPLE GOAL: 10% GROWTH IN CITATIONS FROM REDDIT & YOUTUBE BY X DATE

PRE-WORK

- Use citation data to identify relevant Reddit and YouTube communities
- Set up U/Brand & Reddit Pro
- Create video content calendar with AI-friendly topics

LONG-TERM

- Publish weekly YouTube content
- Active participation in 10+ Reddit subreddits monthly
- Scale native Reddit ads to promote helpful content

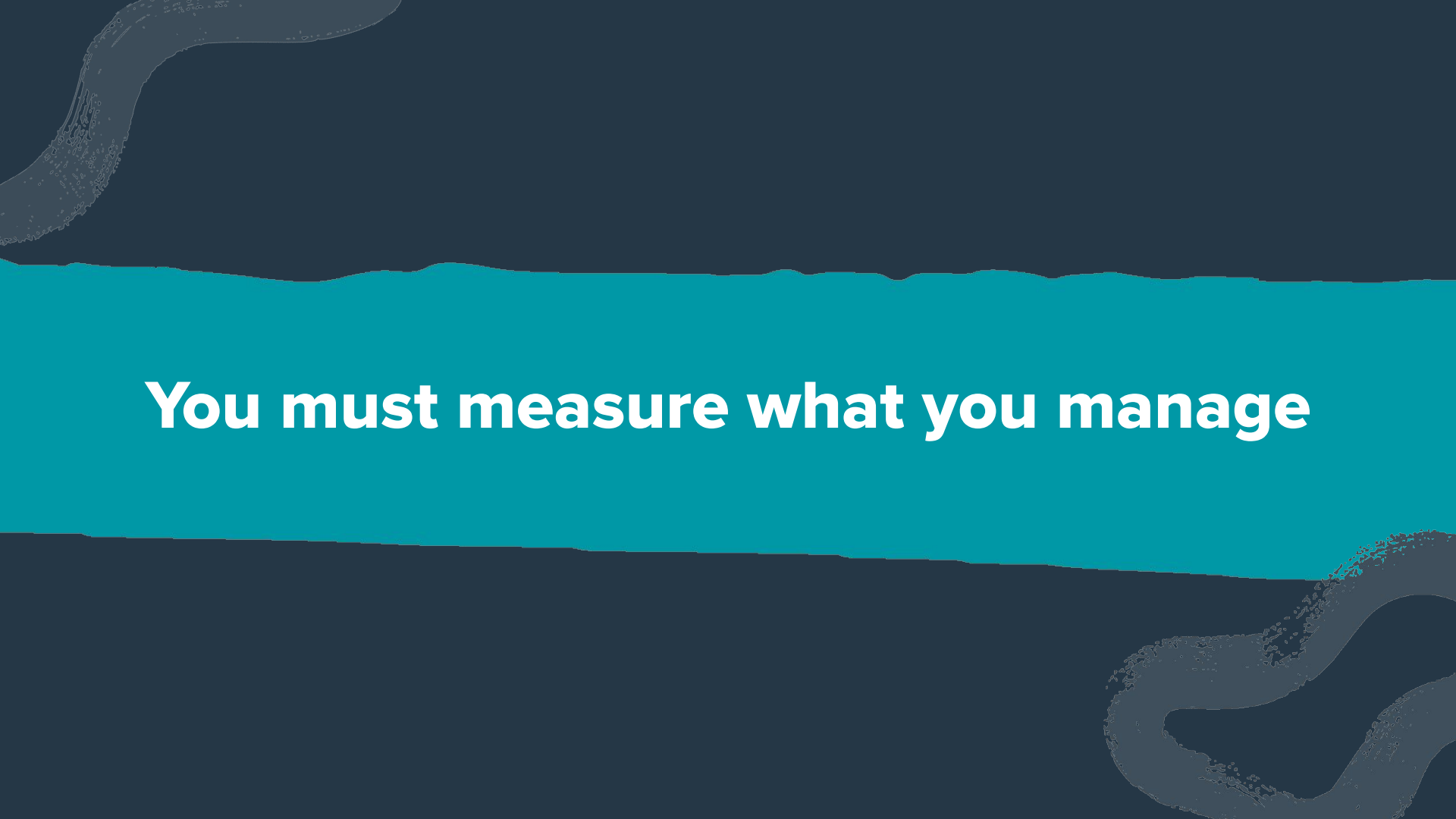
Unifying Silos

Coordination Governance: Social Media owns execution with cross-team content input and roles assigned via RACi.

- **Public Relations** embeds YouTube videos in press releases and links to Reddit U/Brand in press kit/media assets
- **Social Media** creates content calendar for YouTube strategy, Reddit community management, native ad campaigns, and cross-posting content across platforms
- **Product Strategy/GTM** reviews organic social feedback on product sentiment and incrementally applies learnings to content and website
- **Dev/Web/IT** ensures video watch pages or video widgets leverage video schema

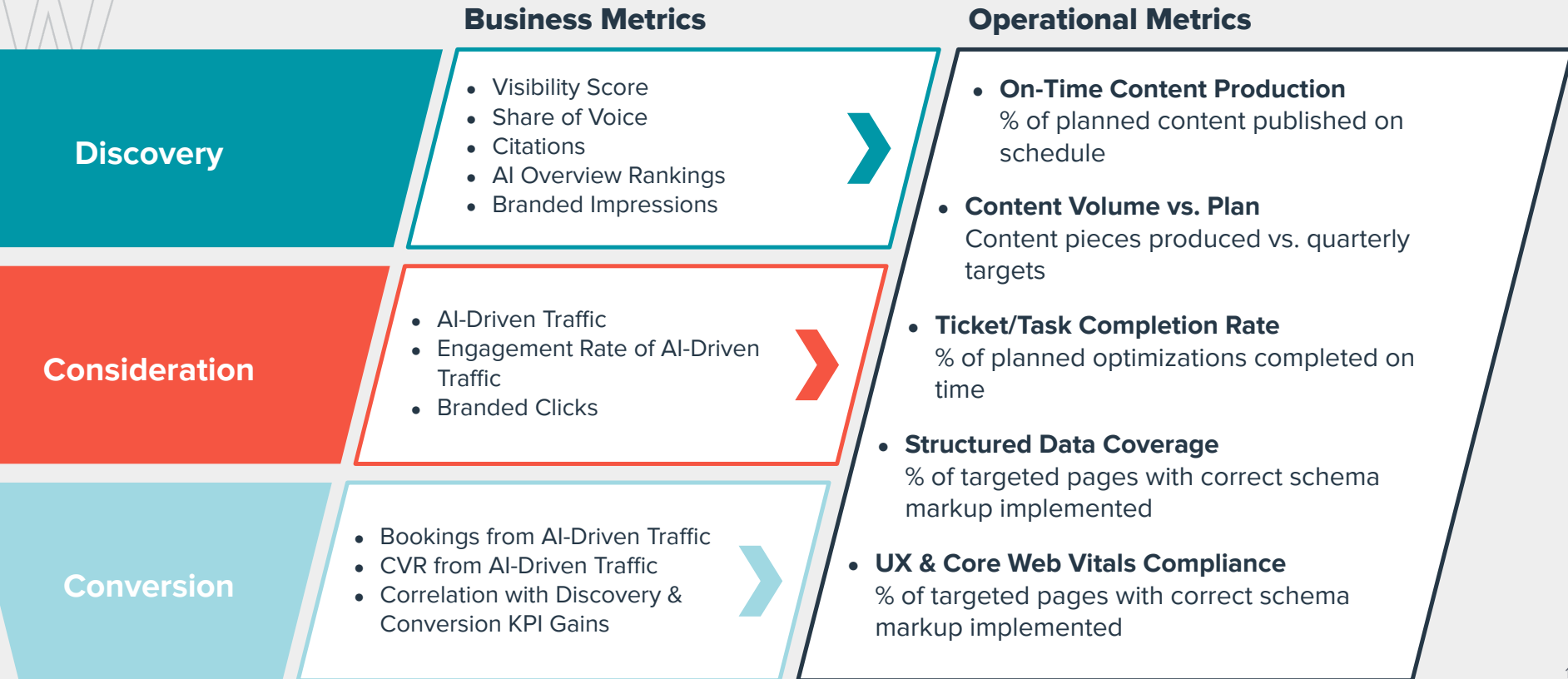
Measure What Matters:

Reddit & YouTube referrals | Video watch time | Community-sourced citations | Brand mentions & visibility | AI-driven traffic & conversions



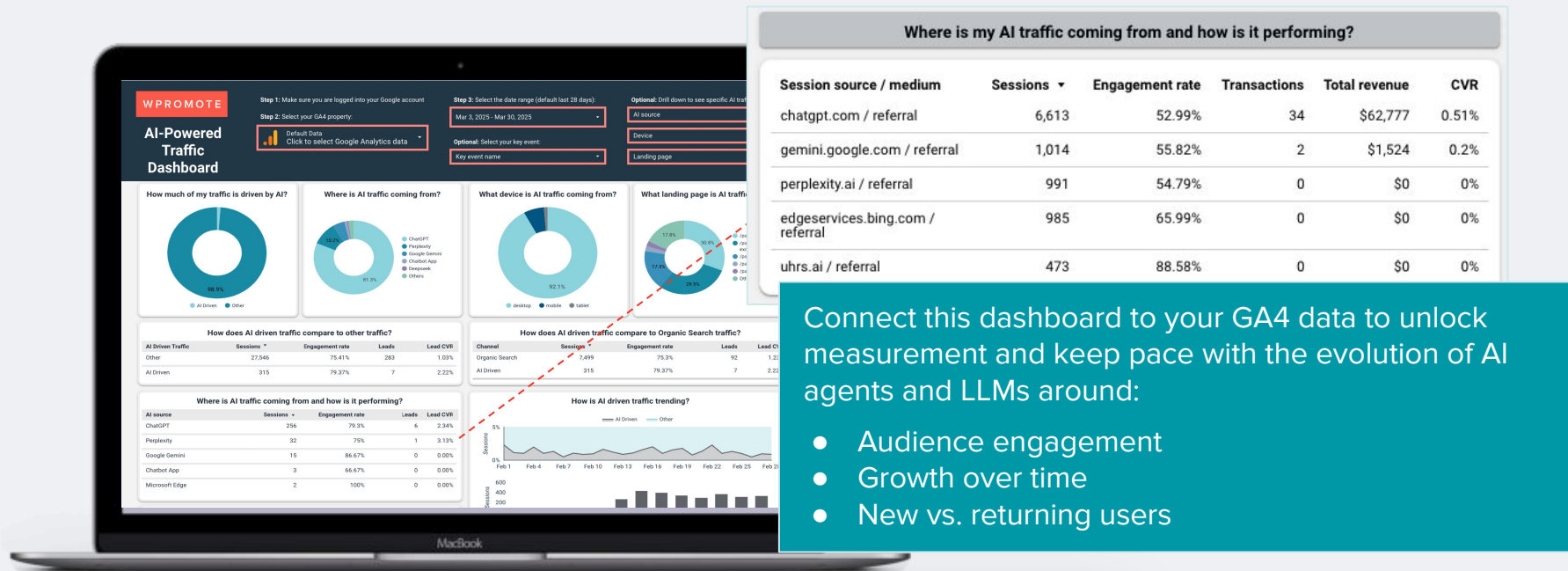
You must measure what you manage

Measuring Performance Gains: Leading & Lagging Indicators of Success



Free Dashboard: Polaris IQ AI-Powered Traffic Report

Get instant access to a free, custom dashboard that reveals exactly how AI tools are driving traffic to your site and what users are doing when they land.

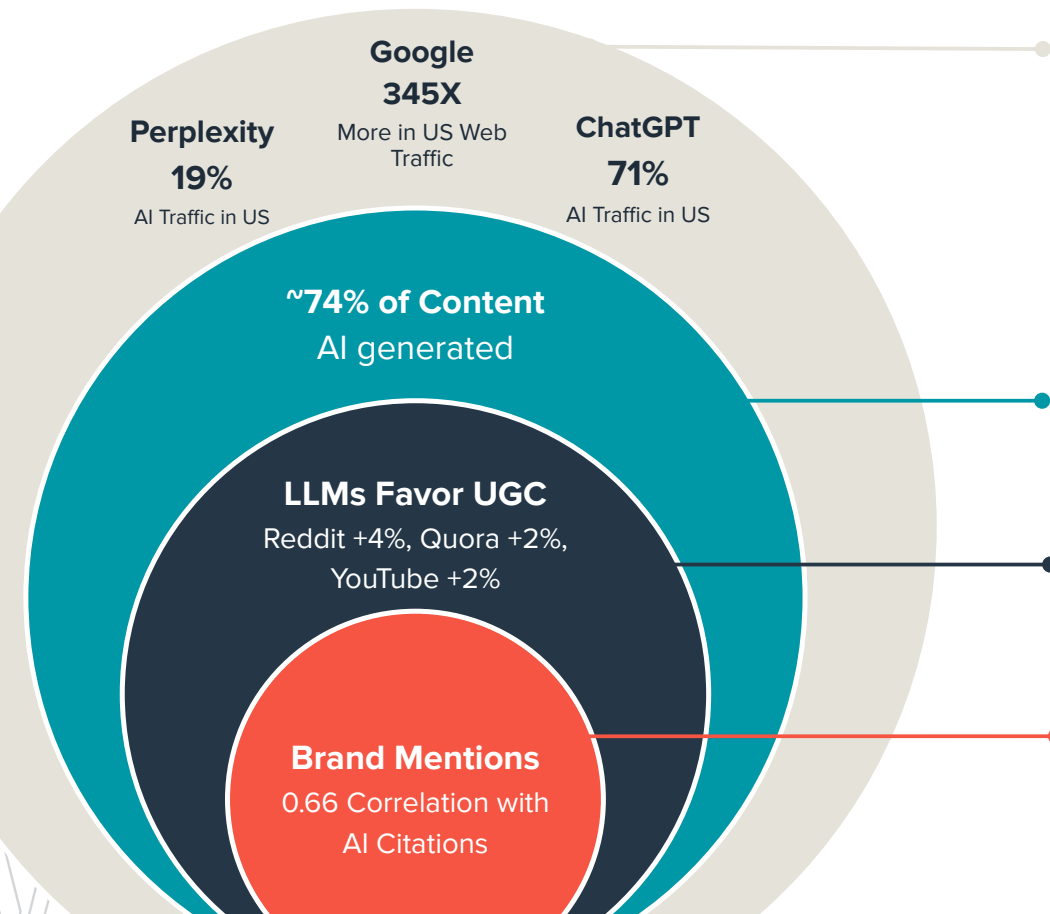


Get Your Free AI-Driven Traffic Dashboard



Key ideas & action items

Key Idea: AI Search Rewards Brands & Authentic Citations



Organic Search Isn't Dead

- Google still dominates & sends 345x more web traffic than all of AI search combined
- Searchers spend 29% longer when engaged in AI chat sessions with LLMs like AI Mode, ChatGPT, & Perplexity (less blue links to sift through is better experience)

Generative AI Content Flooding Results

AI content is everywhere. Standing out is harder than ever.

LLMs Favor Citations with Authenticity

AI rewards brands backed by real validation like UGC, mentions, reviews, and community proof.

Strategic Implications for Brands

Winning mindshare and citations occurs via authenticity and trust from third-party mentions



Putting It All Together: Your AI Search Priorities

Capture more qualified demand, brand mentions & conversions in a shifting search environment.

NAILING CRITICAL PILLARS FOR AI SEARCH

AI Search Planning & Measurement

Establish visibility baselines, align on strategic priorities, and track performance across AI-powered search experiences.

LLM Infrastructure Optimization

Ensure key pages, policies, and data feeds are structured, crawlable, and fast-loading to support accurate indexing and retrieval by large language models across AI-powered search surfaces.

Contextual Content for AI Discovery

Develop structured, theme-based content that clearly communicates brand benefits, differentiators, and offerings so LLMs can accurately interpret and surface your brand across AI-powered search experiences.

Brand Signal Expansion

Strengthen brand trust and visibility by scaling expert-driven content, customer proof points, and brand mentions through strategic distribution across third-party sites, social platforms, and communities.

Constant Evolution: Stay Hungry, Keep Learning



New OpenAI Atlas browser direct threat to Google's monopoly

OpenAI launched new browser with ChatGPT search as default, real-time results, memory, and agent capabilities.

Walmart | OpenAI

Shoppers will make zero-click purchases from Walmart in ChatGPT

Walmart recently announced new partnership with OpenAI that will leverage agentic commerce within ChatGPT using Instant Checkout.



Cracks emerge in Perplexity's ad & monetization model

Perplexity pausing its advertising offering and has yet to crack code for how to monetize ads without destroying user experience.



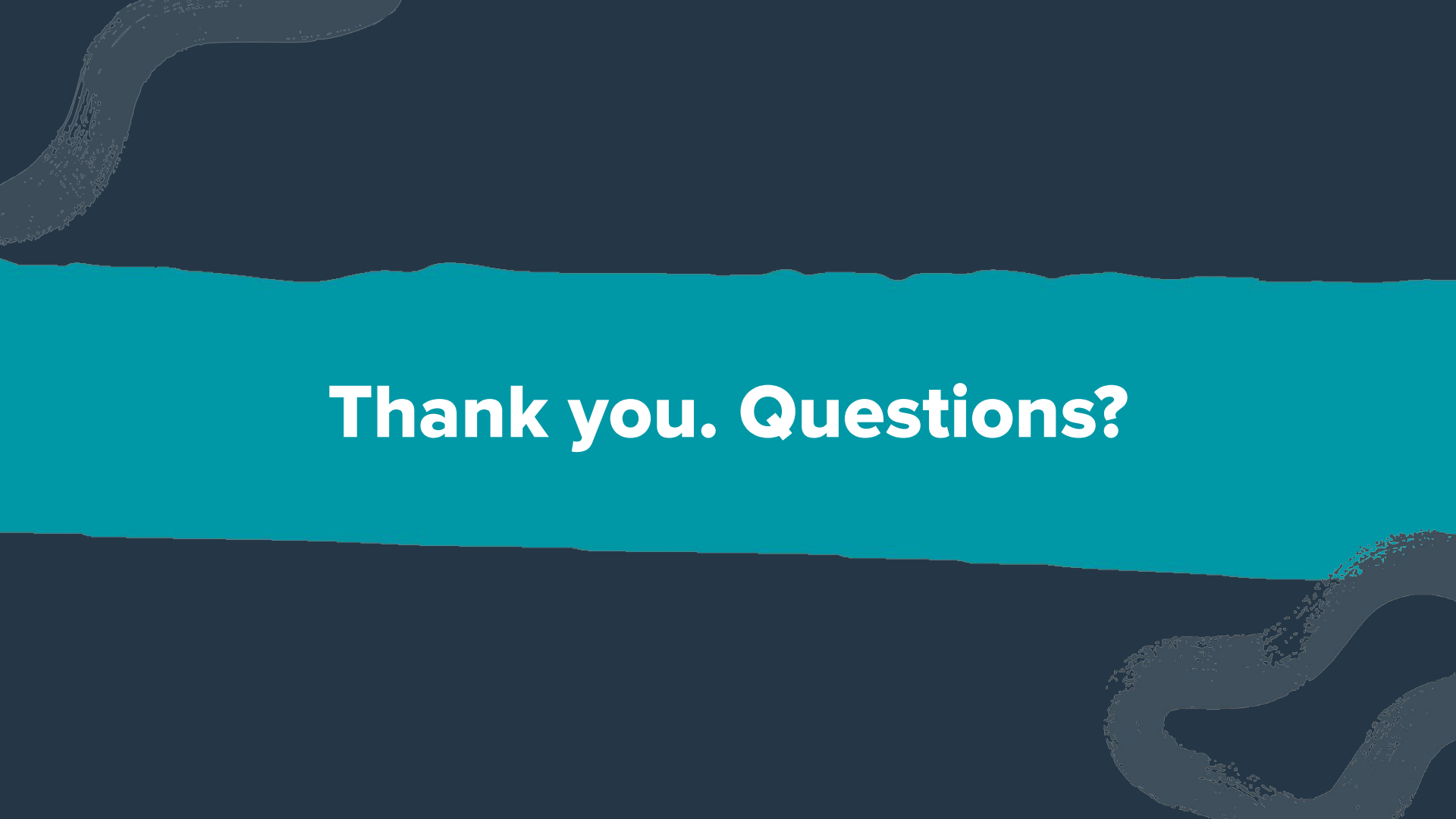
Reddit crusades to limit AI companies from scraping without paying for access

Reddit filed suit against Perplexity for unlawfully scraping its community content (and a similar suit by Reddit was opened in Q2 against Anthropic).

Don't Wait: Act Now!

The brands capturing AI citations now are building compounding advantages. The ones still debating whether to act are falling behind competitors who already started.

- Start measuring AI traffic today. Activate your free [AI-Driven Traffic Dashboard](#) by connecting to your GA4 data in under 5 minutes.
- Identify which silos are costing you the most so you can quantify where misalignment is happening.
- Pick a playbook and run it cross-functionally, setting clear goals and KPIs across teams.
- Measure results leveraging a tool that supports AI search monitoring for citations, sentiment and brand mentions.
- Keep testing and experimenting! Look to your data to identify new hypotheses and add them to your testing agenda so you keep learning and discovering new opportunities.



Thank you. Questions?