LinkedIn

How to Optimize Your Owned Content for AI Search

Search has fundamentally changed. The days of writing just for Google and hoping keywords do the heavy lifting are over.

Large Language Models (LLMs) like Co-Pilot, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Claude act as powerful discovery engines, directly answering user questions and shaping the buyer journey before they even visit your website.

<u>Gartner predicts that by 2026,</u> search engine volume will drop by

25%

as consumers lean more on AI chatbots.

Source: **Gartner, February 2024,**

A staggering

94%

of B2B buying groups now use Generative AI tools for research before speaking to a sales representative.

Source: **LinkedIn Internal Data, 2025**

Brands must create content that is not only optimized for traditional search engines but also structured, credible, and context-rich enough for AI systems to trust and surface. **If your brand isn't appearing in AI-generated answers, you're losing pipeline before it even begins.** Buyers are forming their consideration sets during AI-driven research— if you're not cited, you're not considered. This can result in fewer opportunities, longer sales cycles, and missed revenue potential.

In our B2B ecosystem at LinkedIn, we're navigating this shift ourselves. Early research on a subset of non-brand, awareness-driven keywords showed traffic declines of up to 60% when AI Overviews launched, limited in scope but indicative of how quickly patterns can change. So we analyzed our own web content to see how LLMs pull information for their answers. By studying how these AI systems processed and ranked our pages, we identified several key factors that influence performance: **structure, relevance, and clarity.**

As your partner in adapting to these changes, we're here to help you stay on course while ensuring your audience continues to trust and value your content. This guide provides actionable strategies to apply to your owned content and technical SEO tips for better visibility in AI-powered search results. These insights can be broadly applied to any brand, and we'll keep testing and sharing what we learn to help you stay ahead.

Writing for Humans and AI

Tone and Readability

Your content needs to serve two audiences: your human reader and the AI models that deliver information to them. Google still evaluates content based on quality, usefulness, and originality, so a human-centric approach remains critical.

Write for Clarity and Accessibility:

Use plain, accessible language; aim for concise sentences that minimize ambiguity for both readers and AI.

Adopt a Neutral, Authoritative Voice:

Be straightforward, clear, and accurate. Your goal is to be a quotable and credible source, not a sales pitch.

Write for Snippets:

Assume your content will be pulled into AI-generated answers without its surrounding context. Each section should make sense on its own.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Get straight to the point by starting each section with direct information. Avoid fluffy introductions or branded language that delay the main point.
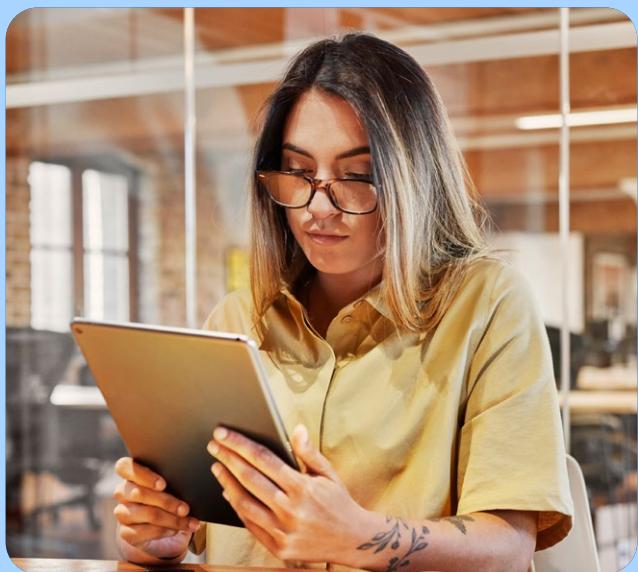
Paragraph and Sentence Structure: Building Blocks for AI

Clear and well-structured sentences are the foundation of content that both humans and AI can easily digest.

DO's

☑ **Use complete, declarative sentences:** Be direct. Instead of writing "Helps grow pipeline," say "Lead generation campaigns increase qualified opportunities."

☑ **Keep sentences short and punchy:** Aim for sentences under 20 words. This improves readability and helps both users and models grasp key points quickly.

☑ **Provide inline context:** Include examples, definitions, or comparisons directly within your sentences. For instance, "Content syndication, such as distributing whitepapers through trusted B2B networks, can expand reach to mid-funnel prospects."

DON'Ts

☒ **DON'T use overly creative language:** Stick to factual, clear writing. Instead of a metaphor like "This campaign was a rocket ship," use direct language like "This campaign produced a 20 percent increase in marketing qualified leads."

☒ **DON'T forget to use transitional words:** Connect ideas with words like because, therefore, or for example to create a logical, easy-to-follow flow.

Optimizing for LLMs vs. Google Search: A Balancing Act

Good news. Many core practices for improving LLM visibility align with established SEO principles. Structured content, strong E-E-A-T signals (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness), along with solid technical foundations all remain essential. However, some changes to content meant to improve mentions or citations can inadvertently affect Google's 'signals'.

What Can Risk Your Google Ranking?

- **Neglecting SEO Fundamentals:** Focusing solely on LLM optimization while ignoring site performance, crawlability, canonical issues, or thin content can hurt your ranking.

- **Over-Compressing Content:** Creating overly short answer blocks might sacrifice the depth that Google values for "comprehensiveness."

- **Radical Site Changes:** Altering your URL structure or removing content without proper redirects can cause Google to lose track of your pages.

Always remember that your ultimate audience is human.

Google remains the primary global search engine

Any major website changes for LLMs must include standard SEO hygiene.

Traditional SEO best practices

Optimization

New LLM optimization tactics

Headings and Hierarchy: Your Content's Framework

A logical heading structure acts as a roadmap, guiding both search engines and AI to the most relevant information on your page.

Make H1 Titles Complete Questions or Answers:

Your H1 should communicate a full idea so readers immediately understand the focus of the page.

Replace H1:
"Lead Generation" ⸺ with ⟶

H1:
"How B2B Teams Generate and Qualify Leads Today"

Break Down Content with H2s and H3s:

Use subheadings to organize your content into smaller, digestible sub-topics that answer specific questions.

Replace H2:
"Best Practices" ⸺ with ⟶

*H2: "*Channels That Drive Qualified B2B Leads"
H3: "How to Drive Higher Intent Traffic"
*H3: "*When Email Outperforms Social for Lead Capture"

Avoid Vague Headings:

Generic labels give readers no information about what follows. Descriptive titles help set expectations.

Replace:
"Overview" ⸺ with ⟶

"What B2B Marketers Need Before Launching a Lead Gen Campaign"

Maintain a Logical Structure:

Headings should move from broad to specific in a predictable order so the page is easy to follow (H1 → H2 → H3). This helps LLMs understand how your content is organized.

Replace this hierarchy, which bounces between somewhat related topics.
* *H1:* Lead Scoring Software ⸺ with ⟶
* *H2:* What Is B2B Lead Generation
* *H3:* How Sales Teams Qualify Prospects

With this hierarchy, which tells an easy to follow narrative.
* *H1:* How to Build a Complete B2B Lead Generation Strategy
* *H2:* Defining Your Ideal Customer Profile
* *H3:* Setting Qualification Criteria for Marketing and Sales
* *H2:* Tactics That Drive High Quality Leads
* *H3:* How to Use Content Offers to Capture Interest

QUICK CHECK

Does Your Content Follow This Heading Logic? Here's how to find out:

☑ Use the browser's "Outline" or "Headings" view by opening the page source and searching for <h1, <h2, or <h3 to quickly see the hierarchy.

☑ Use a headings-only browser extension like HeadingsMap, which automatically extracts all headings and displays them as an outline.

☑ Export the page's HTML into an online HTML outline generator to get an instant view of the heading structure.

How it Should Look:

```
<H1> Call to Action
     <H2>What is a CTA? Examples, Key Benefits, and measurement Strategies
     <H2>Definition: What is a Call to Action (CTA)?
     <H2>CTA examples: Different types of Calls to action (CTA)
          <H3>Different types of CTA formats and designs
               <H4>Buttons
               <H4>Contextual links
               <H4>Banner and video ads
               <H4>Pop-ups
               <H4>Slide-ins or Carousel ads
     <H2>Popular types of CTA copy
     <H2>What are the best practices for writing a call to action
          <H3>1. Be brief, specific, and actionable
          <H3>2. Create a sense of urgency
          <H3>3. Focus on the target audience's goals
          <H3>4. Make sure the CTA button meets the campaign's objectives
          <H3>5. Consider the CTA's surrounding marketing copy

     <H2> Key CTA benefits
          <H3>Increased leads and conversions
          <H3>Improved customer engagement

     <H2> How to measure and test CTA success
     <H2> CTAs help to boost online marketing success
```

Answer-Block Formatting: Don't Bury the Lead

To boost visibility in AI-generated responses, write your content in a way that clearly answers the questions users are likely to type into a GPT chat.

Begin with a Concise Answer Block:

Start major sections with a 30–80 word "answer block" that directly addresses the main topics outlined in the page's H1 or H2 headings.

Provide Deeper Context Afterward:

Follow the answer block with **more detailed explanations, examples, and sources.** This balances the need for concise answers with SEO's demand for comprehensive content.

Use Optional Labels:

Consider adding labels like "Quick Answer:" before your summary block to signal to AI that this is a direct answer.

Sound Familiar?

Answer-block formatting follows the same logic as the traditional SEO pillar and waterfall content approach.

Start with the definitive answer, then let the rest of the page break it down in a structured way.

Example of answer-block formatting →

Internal Linking

Internal linking helps both users and AI systems understand how your content fits together. A clear structure makes it easier for people to explore related ideas and gives search and LLMs stronger signals about what each page covers.

Here's how to approach it:

☑ **Use descriptive, keyword-rich anchors** that tell people exactly what they'll get when they click. Clear labels like "See our LLM Visibility Measurement Framework" work far better than vague prompts like "learn more."

☑ **Link related entity clusters so connected topics reinforce each other.** For example, move between AI search content and AI PR measurement pages to show depth within a theme.

☑ **Maintain a hub-and-spoke structure** where your main pillar page links out to supporting subtopics and those pages link back. This keeps the content organized and easy to navigate.

☑ **Limit link density.** Too many links can feel overwhelming and dilute value. Three to five meaningful internal links per 1,000 words.

☑ **Keep crawl depth shallow for your important hubs.** Key pillar pages should be no more than two clicks from the homepage so users and crawlers can reach them quickly.

Enhancements for AI Extraction: Making Your Content Stand Out

Beyond basic formatting, certain enhancements can encourage conversation and discovery making your content more attractive to LLMs.

Define Key Concepts Explicitly:

Clearly define important terms. For example, "AI Search Visibility refers to how often brand content appears in LLM-generated answers."

Use Structured Lists:

Organize information into bullet points, tables, or numbered lists. LLMs prefer this structure for easy extraction.

Include an FAQ Section:

Add a dedicated FAQ section with real, prompt-style questions. This directly mirrors how users interact with AI.

Use Numbered Steps for "How-To" Content:

#1

For instructional content, format steps in a numbered list *(e.g., "Step 1, Step 2...")*.

If user prompts dictate what and how LLMs pull into the conversation, then content writers need to think about what people are asking in these conversations. We often see people asking the GPTs for 'the most recent' research which should help inform your content's revisions.

Recency & Revision

Display "Last Updated" Metadata:

Clearly show the "Last updated" date on the page, ideally near the title or the footer. This helps both users and AI engines recognize the freshness of your content.

Revisit High-Value Content Regularly:

Review and update important content every 6-12 months. Add new examples, metrics, or updates that reflect current LLM behaviors and trends. This ensures your content remains relevant and accurate.

For Evergreen Guides, Include a "2025 Update" Note:

For content that doesn't expire, add simple "2025 Update" note to signal that the page is refreshed and relevant. This reassures AI engines about the page's freshness.

Update FAQ Schemas After Revisions:

Each time you revise the content, update the FAQ schema to ensure that metadata matches the new content. This keeps your metadata accurate and aligned with the page's latest information.

Example of LLM informed optimization of page

Page summary and bulleted lists improve LLM readability

Jump links improve content structure and discoverability

Headings and subheadings clearly define topic hierarchy and intent

Content answers common "how to use" question for each Ad type

The Technical Side of AI Search #2

Schema and Structured Data: Speaking the Language of AI

Schema markup is a powerful tactic that helps search engines and LLMs understand the context of your content.

Implement FAQPage or QAPage Schema:
This is currently the highest-impact markup for increasing LLM discoverability in our internal testing.

Pair with Article Schema:
Include author, dateModified, headline, and "about" tags to signal credibility and freshness.

Add Organization or Product Schema:
Use sameAs links to trusted sources (e.g., your company's LinkedIn page or Wikipedia entry) to reinforce entity trust.

Ensure Schema Matches On-Page Content:
AI crawlers are getting smarter at checking for consistency between your markup and the visible content.

Pricing Schema:
Use where relevant to give AI systems a clear understanding of cost ranges, plans, or tiers. This can help models present accurate information and reduce ambiguity when summarizing your offerings.

Accessibility and Semantic Markup

Clear structure and accessible formatting help both users and AI systems interpret your content. These are common ADA layers to webpage development which also help with crawl depth and indexability.

☑ Use semantic HTML elements like <article>, <section>, and <aside> to define the layout and meaning of each part of the page.

☑ Keep all visible text accessible by avoiding hidden or script-generated content that crawlers cannot read.

☑ Apply <strong> and <em> tags only for meaning, not styling, since crawlers treat them as semantic signals.

☑ Add descriptive titles and alt text that reinforce context and help models understand relationships across topics.

☑ Follow accessibility best practices to support clearer parsing and more accurate extraction by AI systems.
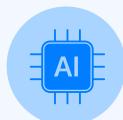
Metadata and URLs: Structuring Signals for AI Search

Titles, descriptions, and slugs give both search systems and AI models early signals about what your page covers. **Clear, natural language in these areas helps models interpret intent and match your content to real user queries.**

- Write titles in natural language that reflect how users ask questions.

- Use full, natural-language slugs that read like prompt-style phrases.

- Avoid abbreviations or internal shorthand in slugs for better alignment with user queries and AI output.

- Use meta descriptions as short, direct answers to the primary query the page addresses.

- Include connector words such as how, what, and why to signal intent.

- Match the URL to the topic expressed in the H1 and core content.

- Keep meta descriptions between 140 and 160 characters for clarity and complete display.

Visual and Media Elements: More Than Just Decoration

Visuals play a bigger role in AI search than most teams realize. Images, diagrams, and videos help models interpret the focus of a page and confirm its relevance, especially when captions, filenames, and surrounding text are aligned with the topic. With the right structure, visual and media elements become strong signals that support extraction, clarity, and visibility.

Optimizing Images for AI Understanding

Captioned, Relevant Media:
Use images that directly support the page's content. LLMs rely on captions, filenames, and alt text to understand their purpose.

Descriptive Alt Text:
Avoid generic descriptions. Provide clear, specific details like "Diagram showing the stages of the digital marketing funnel."

Keyword-Rich File Names:
Use clear, descriptive filenames such as **`stages-of-the-marketing-funnel.png.`**

Making Video Content Discoverable in Generative Search Responses

- **Optimize titles, tags, and descriptions** so the metadata clearly reflects what the video covers. LLMs rely heavily on this information when deciding relevance.

- Minimize the impact of video embeds on page load speed by **compressing files and following performance best practices.** Faster pages improve AEO and user experience.

- **Add transcripts and structured data** like *VideoObject* to give AI systems a clearer understanding of the content and to improve accessibility.

- Strengthen discoverability by **embedding YouTube videos on the page,** which signals that the video supports the topic and increases the likelihood of it being surfaced or cited in AI generated responses.

- **Use standard YouTube iframes** when embedding to create a strong association between your site and a trusted video platform, supporting visibility in both traditional search and AI systems.

PDF Optimization: More Than a Download Button

15

PDFs are crawlable, but only when they are structured, readable, and lightweight. **A well-optimized PDF gives search engines and LLMs the context they need while avoiding performance issues that can lower visibility.**

Context Signals and Connectivity

☑ Add hyperlinks and internal references to connect the PDF to related pages.

Technical Accessibility and Performance

☑ Use machine readable text instead of scanned or image-only documents.

☑ Add descriptive metadata and a clear, keyword-focused filename.

☑ Keep file size small by compressing assets and enabling fast web viewing.

☑ Provide an HTML version for core content and use the PDF as a companion.

Content Structure and Semantic Clarity

☑ Use clear headings, subheadings, bullets, and organized sections.

☑ Write in plain, direct language for accurate extraction and summarization.

☑ Add alt text or captions for charts, diagrams, and other visuals.
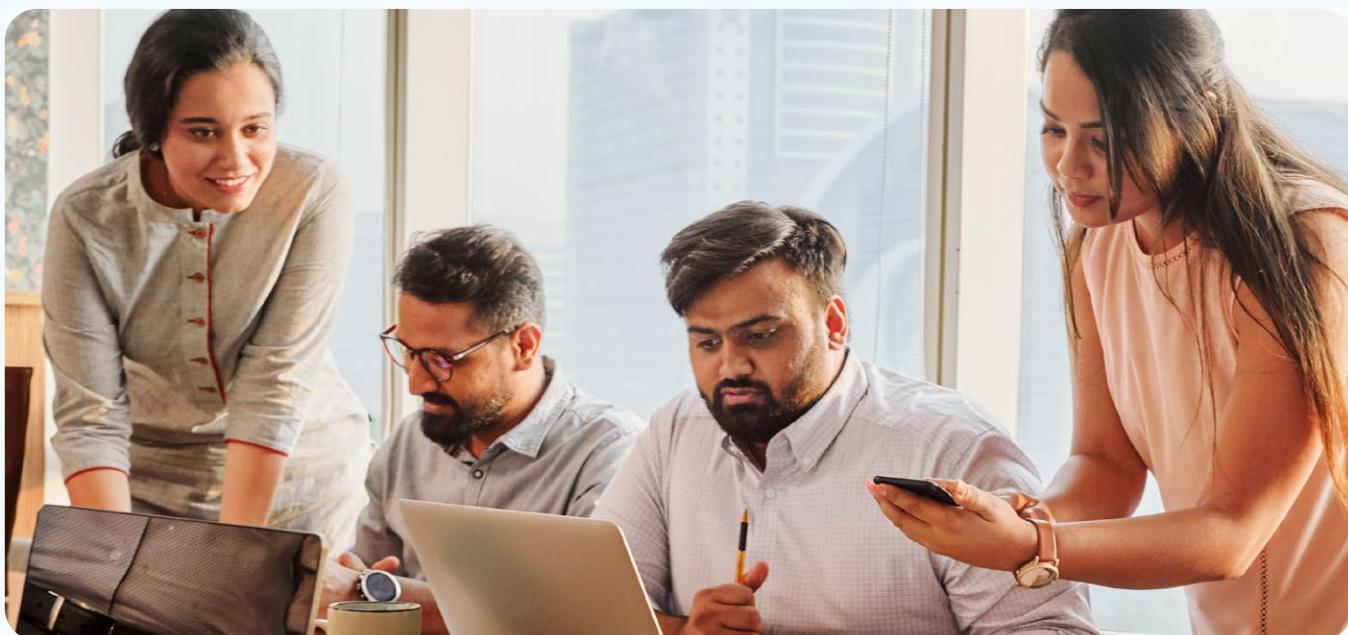
Conclusion

AI search is reshaping how people discover information, and it's pushing all of us **to create content that's clearer, more structured, and genuinely useful.** Teams that make these adjustments now will be better positioned as this new model becomes standard.

We've been applying the same approach to our own pages and are already seeing consistent gains, including month-over-month increases in brand mentions and citations. LinkedIn is navigating this process alongside you, tackling real challenges together.

We'll stay transparent throughout, sharing what works, what doesn't, and what we're still testing. **Stay up to date with our new** B2B Marketer's Guide to AI Visibility series by subscribing to the LinkedIn for Marketing Blog.

Content Optimization Checklist

☑ *Meta Data* ——— Key Action ⟶ Answer the primary question in your meta description.

☑ *URLs* ——— Key Action ⟶ Use a natural, prompt-style slug.

☑ *Headings* ——— Key Action ⟶ Write H1/H2s as clear questions or declarative answers.

☑ *Introduction* ——— Key Action ⟶ Begin each section with a 30–80 word answer block.

☑ *Schema* ——— Key Action ⟶ Use FAQPage or QAPage plus Article schema.

☑ *Content* ——— Key Action ⟶ Write short, direct, factual paragraphs.

☑ *Lists* ——— Key Action ⟶ Add bullets, numbered steps, or tables for easier extraction.

☑ *Internal Links* ——— Key Action ⟶ Use descriptive anchors between related topical pages.

☑ *Visuals* ——— Key Action ⟶ Write descriptive alt text that answers a sub-question.

☑ *Embedded Content* ——— Key Action ⟶ Embed relevant YouTube videos or diagrams to reinforce the topic.

☑ *Video Metadata* ——— Key Action ⟶ Optimize titles, tags, and descriptions for relevance.

☑ *Transcripts* ——— Key Action ⟶ Add transcripts and VideoObject schema for video clarity.

☑ *Recency Content* ——— Key Action ⟶ Display and maintain "last updated" dates.