

The AI Search Audit Checklist.

Thirty things to check on your trades website if you want ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews to actually cite your business when a homeowner asks for a recommendation.

Who this is for: HVAC, plumbing, electrical, roofing, and adjacent trades owners in the Pacific Northwest. The checklist is sharper for trades, but every point works for any local services business.

How to use it: Open your site, open this PDF, work top to bottom. Most contractors fix 12 to 18 of these in one afternoon. The hardest items take a developer or your marketing person a week. Everything else is yours to do.

Why this matters: ChatGPT now answers "best HVAC in Portland" with three named businesses. So does Google AI Overviews. So does Perplexity. If you are not in the answer, you are invisible to the buyer who already decided to ask AI before they scrolled Google.

Need the audit done for you?

Book a free 15-minute audit on Zoom. We run your top three buyer queries through ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews live and send a written 3-fix recommendation within 48 hours.

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Make your pages parseable.

AI engines lift answers from JSON-LD schema markup. Body copy alone is not enough. These ten items are the schema foundation.

- 01 ■ Every service page has **FAQPage** JSON-LD schema with 4 to 8 questions, each answered in 2 to 4 sentences.

- 02 ■ Homepage has **LocalBusiness** schema with name, address, phone, opening hours, and service area.

- 03 ■ Service pages have **Service** schema linking to your LocalBusiness with serviceType named (HVAC repair, water heater install, etc.).

- 04 ■ Every page validates in Google's Rich Results Test with zero errors.

- 05 ■ Each blog post has **BlogPosting** schema with author, datePublished, dateModified, and image.

- 06 ■ Site has **BreadcrumbList** schema on every page, including the homepage.

- 07 ■ Customer reviews use **Review** schema with author, datePublished, reviewRating, and itemReviewed.

- 08 ■ Aggregate review schema on the homepage shows total reviews and average rating.

- 09 ■ Photo galleries use **ImageObject** schema with caption, imageUrl, and width/height.

- 10 ■ Sitemap.xml is up to date and submitted to both Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools.

Be the most quotable answer.

AI engines cite specific declarative answers. Long marketing prose gets skipped. These ten items are about content patterns that get lifted into AI search.

- 11 ■ Every service page answers "how much does X cost in Y city" with an actual range, not "call for pricing."

- 12 ■ Every service page has a "How long does it take" answer with a real timeframe.

- 13 ■ City-specific content is unique per city. Not templated. Different climate notes, different code requirements, different local context.

- 14 ■ Each service has its own dedicated page. Not a single "services" page that lists everything.

- 15 ■ Emergency / 24-hour service has its own page if you offer it (highest-converting query in trades).

- 16 ■ Service area pages name the actual neighborhoods you serve, not just the metro.

- 17 ■ Every page has a clear, scannable structure with H2/H3 headings that match buyer questions.

- 18 ■ Pricing transparency. At minimum, ranges with what affects the range.

- 19 ■ Photos with descriptive alt text on every page. Real job photos, not stock images.

- 20 ■ Internal links between related content. A 3-click path from any page to any service.

Stay active on the channels AI watches.

AI engines treat active businesses as more reliable than dormant ones. These ten items are the freshness and trust signals that move citations.

- 21 ■ Google Business Profile has been posted to within the last 7 days.

- 22 ■ GBP has been posted to weekly for the last 30 days (this is the single biggest local AI ranking signal).

- 23 ■ GBP photos are added monthly. Recent job photos with location tags.

- 24 ■ Customer reviews are responded to within 48 hours, every time. Both positive and negative.

- 25 ■ Sitemap lastmod dates are current (within 30 days).

- 26 ■ Blog or news section has a post from within the last 60 days.

- 27 ■ Site has an **llms.txt** file at the root explaining what your business does and linking key URLs.

- 28 ■ **robots.txt** allows ChatGPT-User, OAI-SearchBot, PerplexityBot, Anthropic-AI, and Google-Extended (these are the AI crawlers).

- 29 ■ Site is registered with **Bing Webmaster Tools** (Bing feeds Microsoft Copilot AI search and gets ~10% of search volume nobody competes for).

- 30 ■ Site uses **IndexNow** protocol to push deploys to Bing and Yandex instantly (free, real signal of an active site).

Score yourself.

26 to 30 items checked

You are already in AI search citations for most buyer queries. Compounding from here. Focus on backlinks and review velocity.

18 to 25 items checked

You will get cited inconsistently. Some queries surface you, most do not. Fix the schema gaps first, then content depth.

10 to 17 items checked

Your competitors are taking the AI search slot you should own. Most of the 30 items are 1 to 2 hour fixes. One focused weekend closes the gap.

Under 10 items checked

AI engines cannot parse your site reliably enough to cite. Start with schema markup on your top three service pages and weekly GBP posts. The rest follows.

WANT US TO DO THE AUDIT FOR YOU?

Book the free audit.

Fifteen minutes on Zoom. We run your top three commercial queries through ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews live. You see exactly who is getting cited for queries you should be winning, and why.

Written 3-fix recommendation in your inbox within 48 hours of the call. You keep it whether or not we ever work together.

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