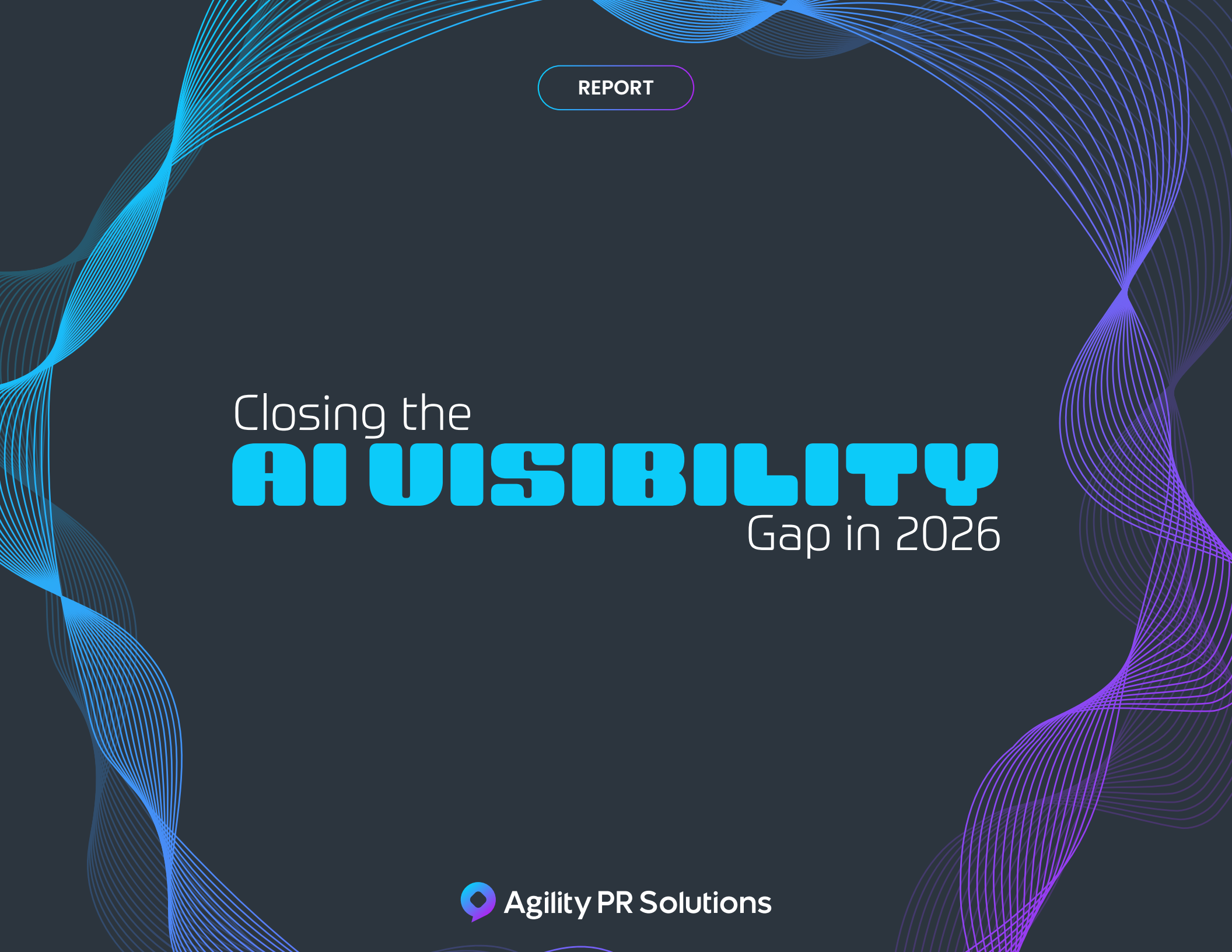




REPORT

Closing the
AI VISIBILITY
Gap in 2026

INTRODUCTION

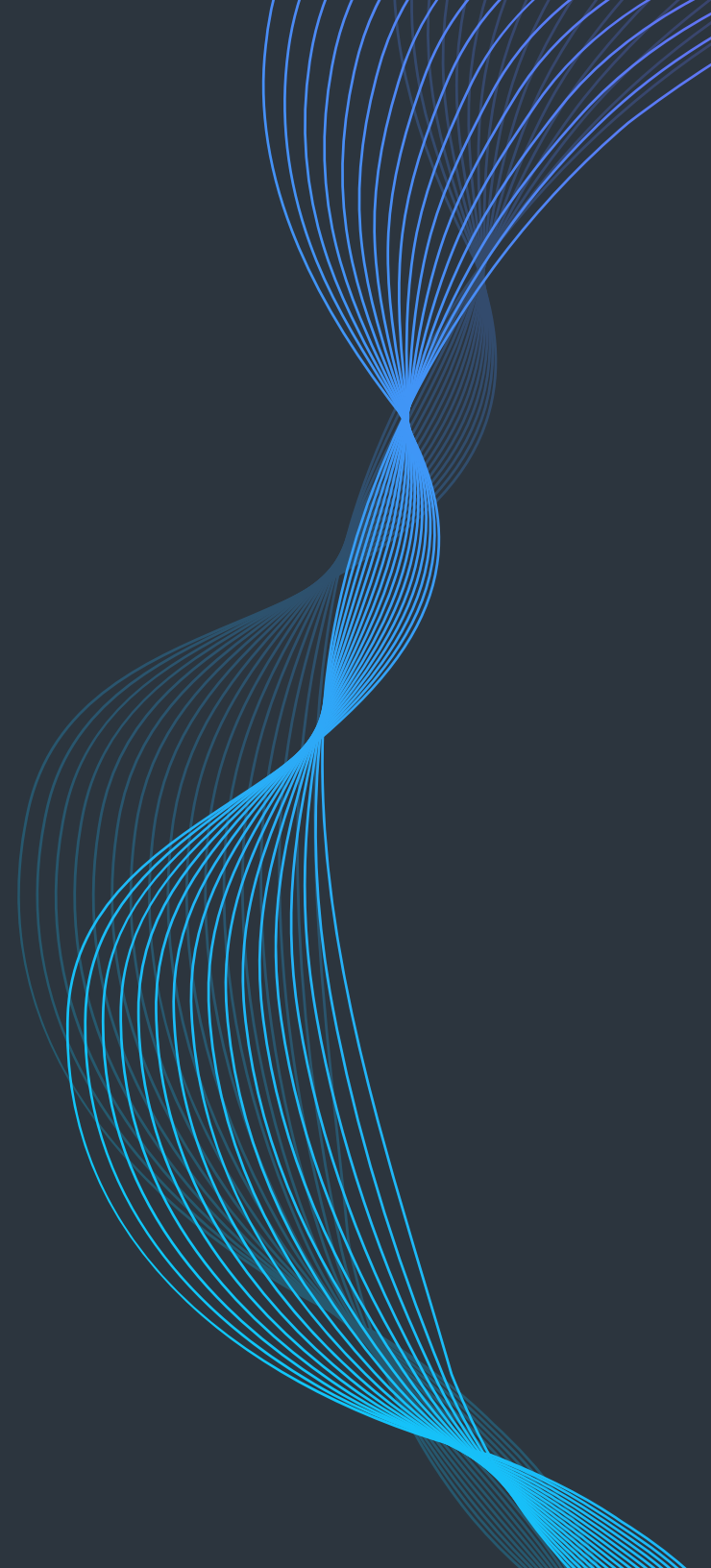
The way buyers search for information is undergoing a fundamental transformation. With more than half of consumers actively prioritizing AI-powered search engines, they are increasingly the first stop for consumers and stakeholders seeking product and service recommendations, expert opinions, and brand intelligence.

Instead of scrolling through results and clicking through to sources, users are receiving direct, curated answers that name specific brands, recommend specific products, and cite specific sources to back those claims. This shift is happening at scale, across every sector, and largely without organizations having visibility into it.

To understand how PR and communication teams are adjusting to this new media landscape, we surveyed 112 PR and communications professionals to understand how AI is affecting their approach to brand visibility and reputation management.

We also conducted a comprehensive data research project that analyzed 24,480 prompt-and-answer pairs across the four leading AI answer engines (OpenAI/ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and Claude) to examine how they serve up brand recommendations. We captured every brand mentioned, every source cited, and the reasoning behind each recommendation.

The findings reveal a landscape where the rules of brand visibility have changed. The sources AI engines trust are not necessarily the same ones traditional PR has prioritized. The factors that drive a brand recommendation are more specific and performance-focused than many assume. And the strategy that works on one engine may not work the same way on another. Understanding these dynamics is no longer optional for communications teams. It is foundational to the profession's future.



KEY FINDINGS

There are only so many seats at the table.

7.5

brands per AI answer. Every prompt is a closed competitive list.

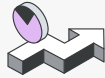


That finite number means every response is a competitive cut, and brands that do not make it are absent from the conversation entirely. For PR teams, this redefines the communications strategy to focus on securing consistent visibility across industry prompts and AI-generated answers.

Most brands are operating blind.

5.6/10

What PR teams rate how accurately AI portrays their brand.



PR professionals surveyed rate their brand's AI visibility at 5.5 out of 10 and the accuracy of their AI portrayal at 5.6 out of 10, despite 46% considering AI visibility a critical or high priority. Traditional media monitoring and share-of-voice metrics do not capture this channel. PR teams need new measurement frameworks to track, understand, and act on their brand's AEO presence.

The platform your audience uses determines your strategy.

#

of citations and brand mentions varies by AI engine. One strategy does not fit all.



The influence of earned media on AI visibility is well established across the industry. What is less understood is how that influence plays out differently depending on which engine your audience uses. Claude cites 3.5 times as many sources per answer as OpenAI. Gemini names nearly twice as many brands per answer as Claude. Each engine has a structurally different approach to sourcing and surfacing information, meaning the same earned media footprint can produce a completely different AI presence depending on where your audience is asking questions.

Industry context changes the rules significantly.

[X]

Every industry has its own AI visibility rules. The brands that know theirs will have the edge.



Citation patterns, brand density, and the factors that drive recommendations vary sharply across sectors, adding another layer of nuance to how earned media translates into AI visibility. Telecommunications draw nearly one in four citations from trade media. Beauty and Hair Care rely heavily on earned coverage in the major press. Healthcare places emphasis on reputation. The type of earned media that moves the needle differs across industries, and understanding your industry landscape is a prerequisite for any meaningful strategy.

Performance is what gets brands cited, not awareness.

79%

of AI brand recommendations are driven by performance.



Approximately 79% of brand recommendations across all four engines are driven by performance-based reasoning. Reputation, price, and popularity play supporting roles in the equation. The communications strategies most likely to drive AEO visibility are evidence-led and outcome-focused.



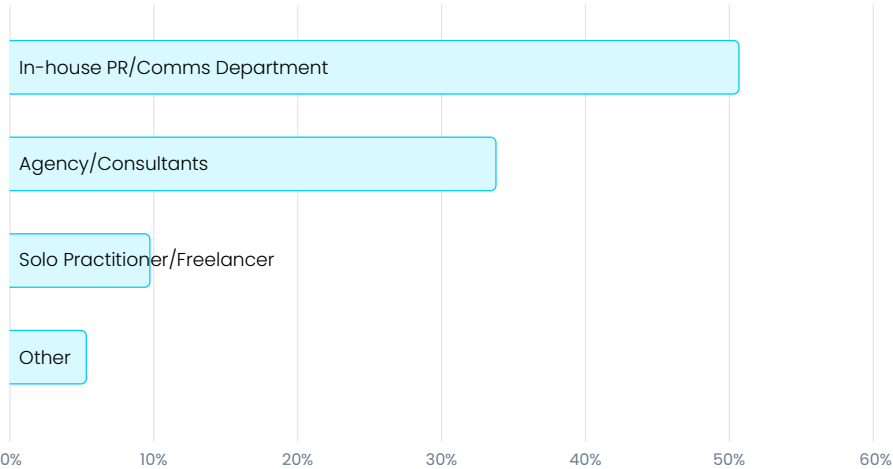
METHODOLOGY

Survey Methodology

To understand how PR and communications professionals are currently prioritizing AI visibility, monitoring their brands across AI engines, and assessing how accurately those engines represent their organizations, Agility PR Solutions conducted an online survey in 2026. In total, 112 responses were gathered, with questions focused on priorities, monitoring practices, current AI visibility perceptions, and satisfaction with how AI answer engines reflect brand messaging, values, and reputation.

Respondent Snapshot

The 112 respondents were primarily based in North America (53.57%), followed by Europe (28.57%), Asia-Pacific (6.25%), and Latin America (5.36%). A small percentage of respondents were from the Middle East and Africa.



Almost half of respondents (50.89%) worked in in-house roles, while the remainder were employed at agencies, or worked as solo practitioners or freelancers.

Data Research Methodology

To understand how AI answer engines interpret, respond to, and source information across a wide range of consumer queries for brand recommendations, Agility PR Solutions conducted an AEO research study in 2026:

Engines Studied

 **OpenAI (ChatGPT)**

Developed by OpenAI, ChatGPT is the most widely adopted conversational AI platform globally, used by consumers and professionals alike to get direct answers to questions, product recommendations, and research assistance. In this study, OpenAI produced the highest rate of answers delivered without any citation (5.5%).

 **Perplexity**

Perplexity is an AI-powered answer engine built explicitly around real-time web search, designed to surface sourced, citation-rich responses to user queries. It had the highest citation inclusion rate in the study at 99.9% and leaned more heavily on corporate content than any other engine.

 **Google Gemini**

Gemini is Google's AI answer engine, integrated across Google Search and Google's broader product ecosystem. It consistently surfaced more brands per answer than any other engine in the study, making it the platform with the highest brand density across all nine industries covered.

 **Anthropic Claude**

Claude is Anthropic's conversational AI platform, known for its ability to write, code, and analyze complex data. It produced the highest average citation count per answer in the study at 12.8, drawing on a broader range of sources per response than any other engine tested.



Prompts

6,120

prompts were submitted to each engine



for a total of 24,480 prompt-answer pairs. Prompts were structured as natural-language, recommendation-seeking queries that mirror how real consumers and professionals ask AI engines for brand and product guidance. These spanned 48 parent industry categories, ranging from Healthcare and Finance to Sports, Entertainment, Technology, and Telecommunications.

What are the best luxury beachfront resorts for couples?

What are the best online florists for same-day delivery?

What are the best smartphones for battery life?

Data Captured Per Answer

183K

brands mentioned overall



For every response, the study recorded the full answer text, all citations (URLs and source names), brand mentions and brand count, citation type classifications and the primary factor driving each brand recommendation. Overall, the study encompassed 177,487 citations and captured 183,004 brand mentions.

Citation Classification

A citation is any external source an AI engine references to support a brand mention or recommendation within its answer. In this study, citations were captured as URLs and source names, then categorized into one of eight types: Major, Trade, Review, Corporate, Press Release, Social, Forum, and Other.

Recommendation Factor Analysis

A brand mention is any instance in which an AI engine names a specific brand within a response to a prompt. Each brand mention was categorized into one of six recommendation factor categories (Performance, Reputation, Price, Popularity, Trust, or Unclear), according to the primary logic an engine used to recommend or reference it, helping identify what drives AI brand visibility.

Data Research Snapshot

The following figures summarize the full scope of the AEO research dataset:

Engine	Avg. Brands	Avg. Citations	Total Brands	Total Citations
OpenAI	6.3	3.6	38,411	22,051
Perplexity	6.8	7.7	41,636	47,221
Gemini	10.6	4.9	64,833	29,904
Claude	6.2	12.8	38,124	78,311
Avg./Total	7.5	7.2	182,004	177,487



SURVEY FINDINGS

The State of AI Visibility

Before diving into the data, we wanted to get a pulse on where PR and communications professionals stand in 2026. How are they thinking about AI visibility? Are they actively monitoring it? And does the current landscape align with how they perceive their brand? The survey findings that follow capture the current attitudes, behaviours, and gaps that shaped the research questions we set out to answer.

Do PR Teams Prioritize AI Visibility?

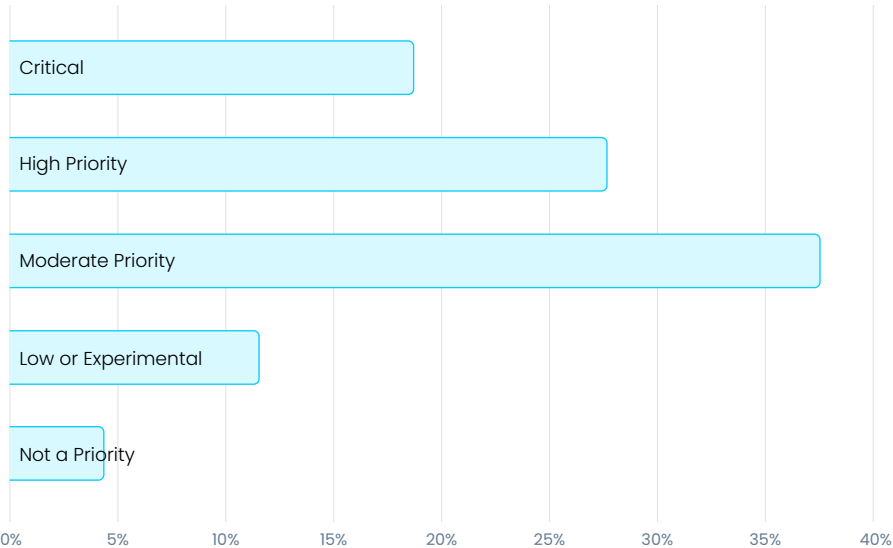
46%

of respondents identified AI visibility and reputation management as a Critical or High



With only 4% not incorporating AI into their strategy.

This signals an increasing recognition among PR and communications teams that AI is here to stay and that tracking visibility across AI platforms will play a crucial role going forward.



Critical: AI visibility and reputation are core KPIs for our organization and team. We have dedicated budget and/or role(s) covering this.

High Priority: We actively optimize for it and include update in every executive/reporting cycle.

Moderate Priority: We Monitor it informally, but it is not yet a primary driver of our strategy or budget.

Low or Experimental: We are currently in a “wait and see” mode or running tests.

Not a Priority: We are focused on traditional PR/SEO and do not currently view AI visibility as a strategic pillar.

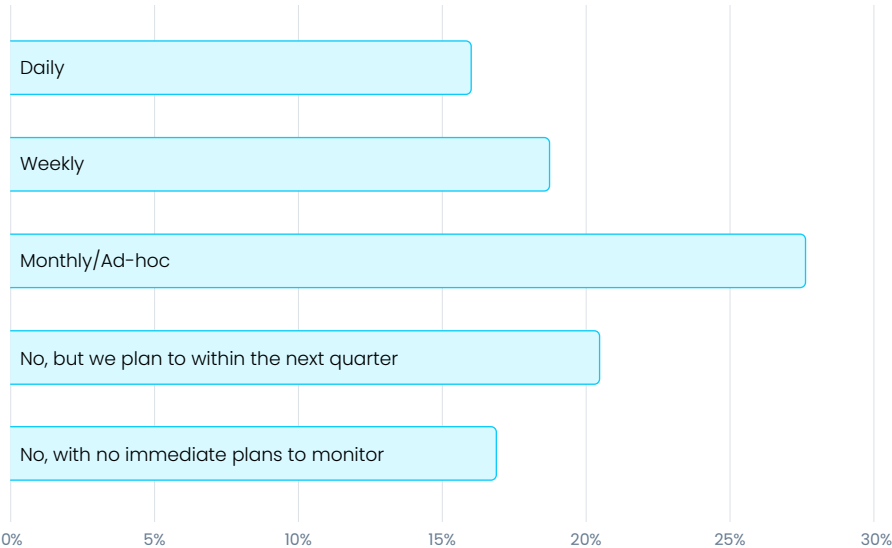
How Often Do You Monitor Your Brand Across AI Engines?

~62%

of respondents actively monitor how they are represented across AI answer engines at least monthly

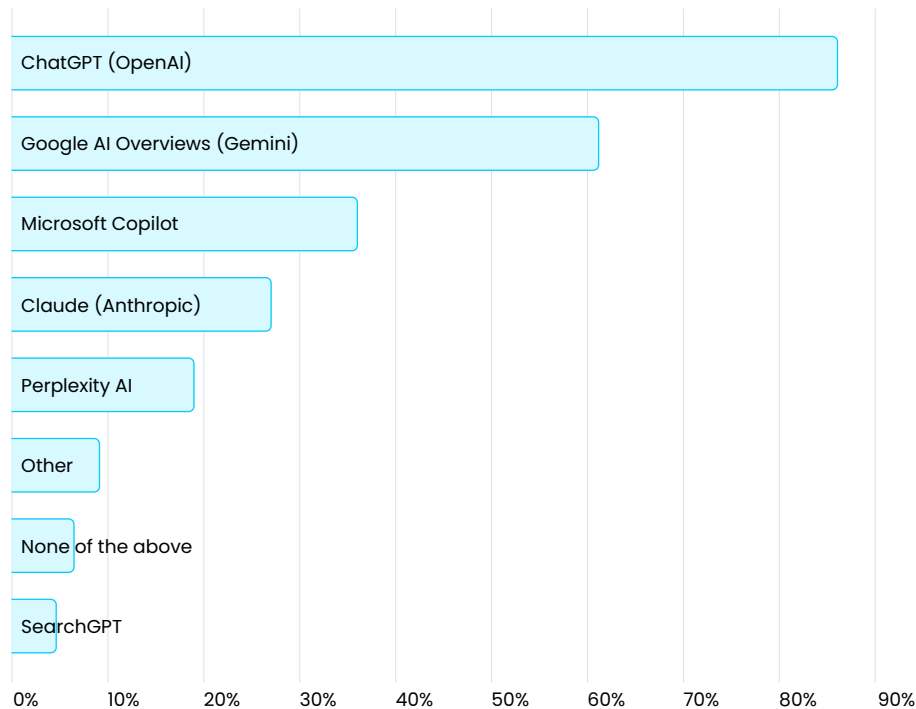


With 34.8% doing so daily or weekly.



What Are Your Preferred AI Answer Engine Platforms?

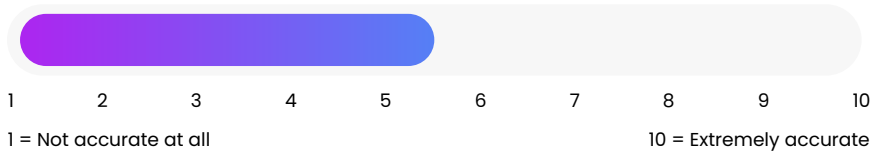
When asked to select the top three AI answer engines they prioritize in their work, respondents ranked ChatGPT (OpenAI), Google AI Overviews/Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot as the most commonly chosen platforms.



How Accurately Do You Think Your Brand Is Portrayed Across AI Answer Engines?

On a scale from 1-10, with 1 being not at all accurate and 10 being extremely accurate, respondents on average rate their brand's (or clients') a 5.6 on how well AI answer engines reflect intended messaging, values, and reputation.

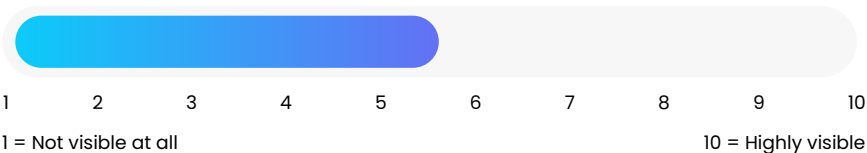
This signals that PR professionals are not only underrepresented in AI responses but also unsure whether the representation they have is accurate. It points to a clear need for both best practices and the right tools to ensure intended messaging, values, and reputation are being fed to and reflected by AI answer engines.



How Do You Rate Your Current AI Visibility?

On a scale from 1-10, with 1 being not visible at all and 10 being highly visible, respondents on average rate their brand's (or clients') AI visibility as 5.5.

This score suggests that PR and comms teams find their brands are surfaced by AI answer engines roughly half the time on average, leaving significant room for improvement in visibility across all engines.



DATA RESEARCH FINDINGS

How AEO Engines Structure Responses

Our survey reveals that communication professionals realize the growing importance of AI visibility across the industry and the opportunities to increase visibility in a fragmented landscape.

Now let’s look into how major AI engines interpret prompts, structure responses, and identify brands.

Composition of AI Answers: Brands and Citations Per Engine

The engine your audience uses to ask questions significantly shapes how many brands are surfaced and how many sources are cited. While OpenAI, Perplexity, and Claude show relatively comparable brand density per answer, Gemini names significantly more brands per response on average. Citation volume follows a similar pattern, with Claude drawing on considerably more sources per answer than the other three. The differences, though not major, are meaningful enough to warrant a tailored approach.

Engine	Avg. Brands	Avg. Citations	Citation Rate
OpenAI	6.3	3.6	94.5%
Perplexity	6.8	7.7	99.9%
Gemini	10.6	4.9	99.3%
Claude	6.2	12.8	99.7%
Avg. Accross All	7.4	7.25	98.35%

Citation Presence: Are Citations Always Included?

With the narrow exception of a small subset of OpenAI answers, citations appear in virtually every AI response. Perplexity (99.9%), Gemini (99.3%), and Claude (99.7%) all include citations in nearly every answer. OpenAI has the highest variability, with 94.5% of answers including at least one citation.

For PR teams, this signals that brands and sources that are not accessible or unindexable online are effectively invisible to AI platforms and to audiences that rely on them. The practical takeaway is that AEO is a citation-driven medium. If your content is not cited, your brand will not make the list.

Citation Presence Across Engines

With the exception of some prompts, citations appear in virtually every AEO answer:

 OpenAI (ChatGPT) 94.5%

94.5% of answers include at least one citation, with an average of 3.6 citations per answer.

 Perplexity 99.9%

99.9% of answers include at least one citation, with an average of 7.7 citations per answer.

 Google Gemini 99.3%

99.3% of answers include at least one citation, with an average of 4.9 citations per answer.

 Anthropic Claude 99.7%

99.7% of answers include at least one citation, with an average of 12.8 citations per answer.

The near-universal presence of citations underscores that AEO is fundamentally a content-verification medium. Brands and sources that are not accessible, citable, or verifiable online are effectively invisible to these engines, and ultimately, your audience.



Citation Breakdown: Where AI Engines Source Information

The citation breakdown across all four engines makes one thing immediately clear: earned media plays a central role in shaping how AI engines source and validate brand recommendations. Setting aside the corporate category citations (which combine both owned and earned depending on the source), every other significant citation type in this study is an example of earned media.

Trade publications, major media, reviews, and social content collectively account for a meaningful share of citations across all four engines, none of which a brand can directly control.

Even within the corporate category, the definition includes both owned content (such as a brand's own website, product pages, and press releases) and earned corporate content (third-party organizational sites, partner pages, and industry peer mentions). Press releases remain the only citation type that is distinctly owned content, but it accounts for less than 1% of citations on average across all four engines.

This is a defining factor, revealing that the vast majority of what AI engines actually cite when recommending a brand sits outside the brand's direct control. Owned content matters as a foundation, but it is a brand's earned presence across the broader web, through trade coverage, major media, reviews, and third-party organizational mentions, that does much of the heavy lifting in determining AI visibility.

Citation Type	Definitions	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Corporate	Official material produced by the organization or company being discussed (e.g. product pages, corporate blogs, official documentation, FAQs), or by a third-party organization or company, often within the same industry (e.g. a partner or competitors' product pages, corporate blogs, official FAQs)	53.2%	63%	51.6%	53.5%	55.3%
Trade	Industry-focused outlets that cover a particular sector or profession in depth (e.g., AdAge, Automotive News, Medical journals/industry blogs, specialized tech sites)	12.7%	10.9%	12.2%	14.1%	12.4%
Other	Independent third-party coverage or mentions by an entity that don't fit major media or standard trade outlets—examples include local news, podcasts, YouTube transcripts, newsletters (Substack), influencer coverage, expert interviews, citations in independent blogs	11.7%	14%	16%	18.1%	14.9%
Review	User-generated review sites and consumer ratings or aggregated review platforms (e.g., Amazon reviews, Yelp, TripAdvisor, Rotten Tomatoes, consumer-report aggregators, G2)	4.8%	4.3%	3.6%	5.8%	4.6%
Major	Large, mainstream national or international news organizations with formal editorial processes and wide audiences (e.g., The New York Times, BBC, Reuters, Associated Press)	6.6%	1.4%	3.1%	3.3%	3.6%
Press Release	Official, structured news announcements issued by an organization to the media, often distributed via wire services or hosted in a dedicated "Newsroom" or "Investor Relations" section; (e.g. businesswire.com, prnewswire.com, prweb.com, openpr.com, einpresswire.com, globenewswire.com or official company news releases)	1.7%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.72%
Social	Content posted on a social media platform (e.g., X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	0.3%	2.5%	7.1%	0.2%	2.5%
Forum	User-generated discussion platforms where humans exchange peer-to-peer advice. (e.g., Reddit, Quora, Stack Overflow)	0.3%	1.5%	3.2%	1.3%	1.5%

Recommendation Factors: What Drives AEO Visibility?

The research linked each brand mention to the primary recommendation factor the engine used to justify its inclusion, revealing a clear and consistent hierarchy across all four engines.

Across all four engines and all 48 industry categories, performance is the dominant factor in brand recommendations. This means AEO engines primarily cite brands based on what they do, how they perform, and the outcomes they produce, not simply because of fame, reputation, or price.

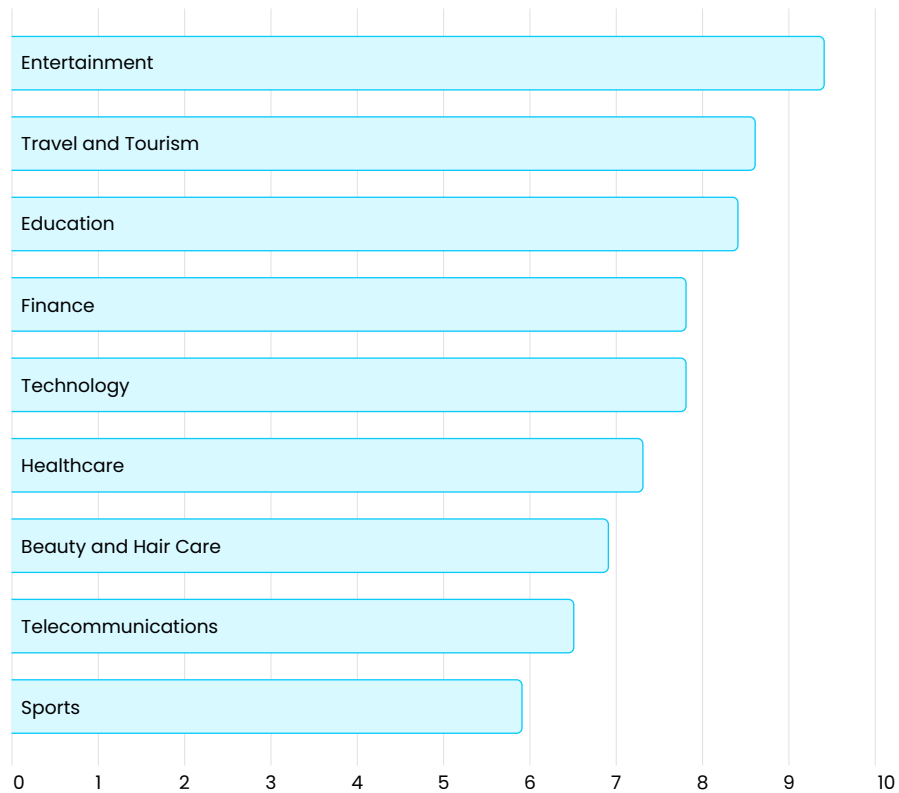
Recommendation Factor	Definitions	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Performance	Recommendation based on how well a product works and the capabilities it offers	80.88%	79.7%	78.6%	76.1%	78.8%
Reputation	Recommendation due to recognized expertise or standing of the maker or source	12.1%	12.3%	15.8%	16.1%	14%
Price	Recommendation driven by cost and the perceived benefit relative to price	3.1%	4.5%	3.6%	4.3%	3.8%
Trust	Recommendation grounded in confidence from reliability, safety, or endorsements	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%
Popularity	Recommendation because many users choose or adopt it	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	1%	0.6%
Unclear	No clear dominant reason can be determined from the available information	2%	1.4%	0.3%	1%	1.1%



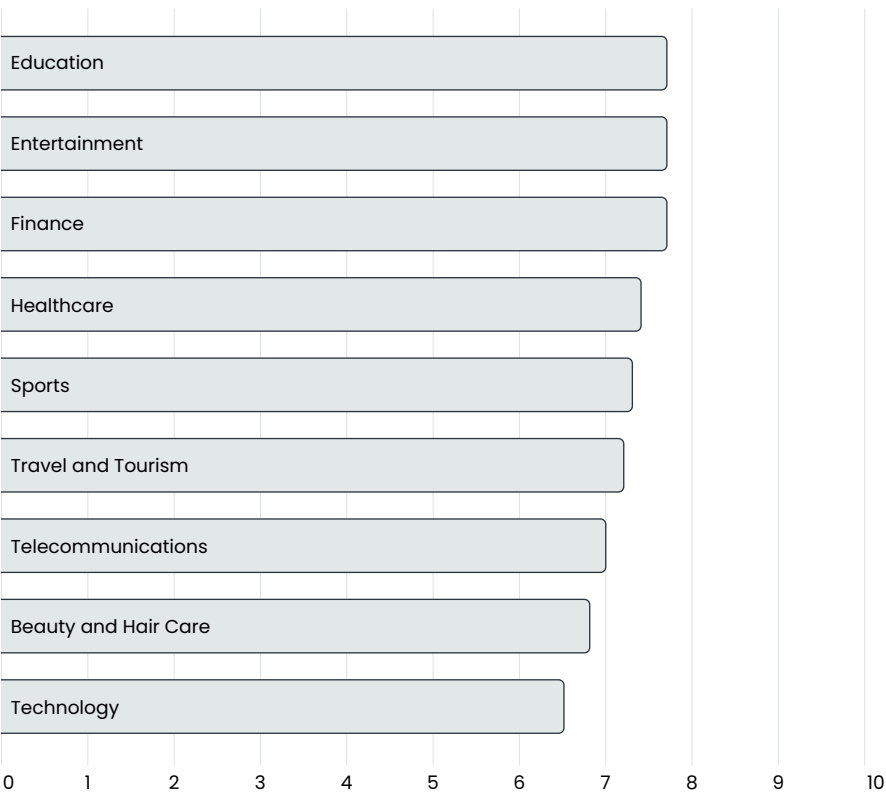
Industry Deep Dive: How Your Niche Determines Your AEO Strategy

AEO is not a one-size-fits-all function. Our research reveals that industry context fundamentally changes the rules, from which sources engines trust, to how many brands get named, to what ultimately drives a recommendation. For PR professionals, understanding the AEO profile of your specific sector is critical to enhanced AI visibility.

Industry Average Brands/Answer



Industry Average Citations/Answer



Let's take a deeper look at some of the core industries we analyzed in our research:

BEAUTY AND HAIR CARE

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	5	6.8	10	5.6	6.9
Avg Citations/Prompt	3.5	6.1	7.5	10	6.8
Top Citation Source	Major	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

With approximately 7 brand mentions and citations across engines, Beauty and Hair Care aligns closely with the overall study average, highlighting intense competition for top visibility spots.

Major and Other sources dominate citations in Beauty and Hair care (with only Perplexity being the exception), signalling that a strong earned media presence across mainstream organizations and independent third-party mentions is a core visibility driver for this industry.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	36.1%	5.2%	16.3%	19.6%	19.3%
Trade	13.4%	3.5%	10.1%	4.6%	7.9%
Review	5.2%	4.7%	1.9%	5.4%	4.3%
Corporate	21.6%	64.5%	36.4%	49.3%	42.8%
Press Release	0%	0.6%	0%	0%	0.1%
Social	0%	5.2%	13.9%	0%	4.7%
Forum	0%	0%	1%	1.4%	0.6%
Other	23.7%	16.3%	20.6%	19.6%	20%

Performance is an overwhelming recommendation driver in Beauty and Hair care (Avg. 91% recommendations across engines), meaning brands are surfaced almost exclusively for what they do and deliver. Results-forward content, benchmarks, and outcome-based messaging are essential for AEO visibility in this sector.



EDUCATION

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	7.2	7.6	11.8	7	8.4
Avg Citations/Prompt	4	7.9	4.4	14.6	7.7
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

Brand density is high in Education with an average of 8 brands mentioned per response, and coupled with a corporate-heavy citation outlook, the overview reveals a fragmented niche where AI visibility requires a comprehensive content strategy built around valuable information, audience intent, and use cases.

Reputation plays an impactful secondary role in driving recommendations, indicating that brands in Education will benefit from combining outcome-based content with reputation-building in their communications strategy.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	3%	0.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%
Trade	9.5%	7.1%	7%	9.1%	7.7%
Review	3.2%	4.1%	2.3%	4.4%	3.4%
Corporate	69.5%	65.9%	59.1%	58.5%	60.1%
Press Release	1.5%	0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Social	0.4%	1.2%	8.4%	0.1%	2.4%
Forum	0.2%	0.8%	2.9%	0.7%	1.1%
Other	12.7%	20.5%	18.6%	25.8%	18.6%
General Reference	10.4%	2.4%	3.3%	2.9%	4.8%

Claude generates the most citations per prompt in Education, almost twice as many as the second, suggesting it draws on a broader range of sources in this category. Staying consistent with its pattern, Gemini also mentions the most brands (11.8) among AI engines.



ENTERTAINMENT

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	6.2	8.2	15.3	7.8	9.4
Avg Citations/Prompt	3.5	7.5	4.1	15.5	7.7
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

Entertainment is the most competitive AEO landscape in the study. AI engines average 9.4 brands per answer, with Gemini surfacing 15.3 brands per prompt, the highest brand density of any industry across any engine. In categories this crowded, consistent visibility requires a content and coverage footprint broad enough to surface across different query types on multiple engines.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	5.9%	1.8%	3.4%	4.2%	3.6%
Trade	21.5%	10.1%	13.1%	10.5%	13.1%
Review	1.5%	3.7%	1.1%	4.5%	2.6%
Corporate	57%	69.3%	44.3%	60%	55.5%
Press Release	0%	0%	0%	0.2%	0%
Social	0.7%	2.1%	11.4%	0.6%	3.6%
Forum	0.7%	2.5%	2.8%	1.7%	1.9%
Other	12.6%	10.4%	23.9%	18.3%	15.8%
General Reference	11.2%	0.3%	1.1%	2.7%	3.8%

Reputation accounts for 21% of recommendations in Entertainment, well above the cross-sector average. Industry recognition is an active input alongside functional merit here, meaning reputation-building, critical acclaim, and authoritative coverage are not soft PR objectives. They directly affect AEO inclusion.

Platform strategy matters too. Gemini's social media citation rate in Entertainment reaches 11.4%, one of the highest in the study. PR teams targeting Gemini visibility in this category should treat social content and community presence as genuine AEO inputs, not afterthoughts.



FINANCE

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	7.5	6.9	10.4	6.4	7.8
Avg Citations/Prompt	3.8	7.3	5.8	14	7.7
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

Finance has the second-highest trade press citation rate in the study at 20.4%, behind only Telecommunications. For communications teams in this sector, sustained trade media presence is not a secondary PR objective. It is one of the clearest pathways to building a citation footprint that holds across multiple AEO platforms.

Price plays a more prominent role in Finance than in any other industry, averaging 15.2% as a recommendation factor, compared with a 4% average across all industries. AI engines are actively surfacing competitive value and cost-related differentiation as brand selection criteria here.

Major media also carry more weight in Finance than in most other categories, averaging 8% across engines and reaching 12.9% on OpenAI. It is one of the few sectors where top-tier financial press coverage translates directly into AEO citation weight, making mainstream placements a higher-return investment for brands targeting OpenAI visibility specifically.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	12.9%	5.6%	5.1%	10.1%	8%
Trade	18.2%	20.7%	21.9%	24.2%	20.4%
Review	3.6%	3.5%	5.9%	4.7%	4.2%
Corporate	48.2%	49.6%	41.4%	38.3%	42.4%
Press Release	2.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.9%	1%
Social	0.3%	2.4%	4.2%	0.1%	1.7%
Forum	0.2%	0.9%	3.2%	1.1%	1.3%
Other	13.9%	16.8%	18%	20.7%	16.7%
General Reference	8%	2.8%	3.4%	3%	4.3%



HEALTHCARE

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	4.9	6.8	11.2	6.3	7.3
Avg Citations/Prompt	3.3	8.3	4.9	13.1	7.4
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

Healthcare has the highest corporate web citation concentration of any industry at 61.4%. Because corporate citations span a brand's own site, partner networks, directories, and industry pages, a healthcare brand's AEO footprint extends well beyond its owned content. How a brand is represented across the broader corporate web shapes its visibility in ways an owned content strategy alone cannot address.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	6%	1.5%	3.6%	4.1%	3.6%
Trade	14.1%	9.5%	9.8%	14.9%	11.4%
Review	3.7%	3%	2.8%	4.2%	3.2%
Corporate	62.6%	73.2%	62.8%	62.2%	61.4%
Press Release	2.9%	0.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%
Social	0.1%	1.1%	4.1%	0.1%	1.3%
Forum	0%	0.3%	1.2%	0.4%	0.5%
Other	10.7%	11.1%	14.6%	13%	11.6%
General Reference	9.6%	3.6%	6.2%	4.1%	4.3%

Reputation averages 21.1% of recommendations across all four engines, reaching 25.8% on Gemini, well above the cross-sector average. Institutional credibility, clinical authority, and trust-based standing are active recommendation drivers in this category. Third-party validation, expert endorsement, and earned coverage are not reputational extras. They are AEO inputs.

Brand density is notably lower on OpenAI and Claude, which surface an average of 4.9 and 6.3 brands per prompt, respectively. The competitive field on these platforms is narrower, and the barrier to consistent inclusion is higher, making platform-specific strategy more consequential in Healthcare than in most other sectors.



SPORTS

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	5	5.6	8.4	4.7	5.9
Avg Citations/Prompt	3.5	7.6	5.1	13.1	7.3
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

Sports has the highest review citation rate of any industry in the study at 8.7% across all four engines, reaching 13.8% on OpenAI and 10.3% on Claude. Peer evaluation and third-party assessment platforms are an active AEO citation channel in this category, unlike in most others. Building and maintaining a strong review presence here is a direct visibility input, not a reputation management afterthought.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	4.9%	1.7%	2.3%	3.7%	3.1%
Trade	14.4%	10.7%	13.2%	13.5%	12.7%
Review	13.8%	6.5%	4.8%	10.3%	8.7%
Corporate	50.3%	59.2%	46%	52.9%	51.4%
Press Release	0.4%	0%	0%	0.4%	0.2%
Social	0.1%	4.9%	12%	0.3%	4.3%
Forum	0.6%	3.2%	5.7%	2.4%	3%
Other	15.5%	13.9%	16%	16.6%	15.2%
General Reference	2.2%	0.5%	1.1%	1.7%	1.4%

On Gemini, social media citations reach 12% and forum citations 5.7%, both among the highest in the study. Community content and fan discussion platforms are sources this engine actively draws on in Sports.

Brand density is the most concentrated of any industry, averaging 5.9 brands per prompt. The competitive field is narrow, which cuts both ways. Earning consistent inclusion is harder, but a well-executed AEO strategy can deliver meaningful share-of-answer gains precisely because the shortlist is short.



TECHNOLOGY

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	8.2	7.2	9.1	6.5	7.8
Avg Citations/Prompt	3.8	7.1	4.5	10.7	6.5
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

Technology carries the highest trade press citation rate of any industry in the study, averaging 20.8% across all four engines. In a category that moves fast and rewards specificity, AI engines treat specialist publications as primary authorities. For PR teams, the pitch list is as strategically important as the placement itself.

Performance drives 92.3% of brand recommendations in Technology, the highest of any industry studied. AI engines recommend tech brands almost exclusively for what they do and how well they do it. Capability evidence, benchmarks, and measurable outcomes are the content assets that drive AEO visibility here, not awareness or reputation alone.

Engine behaviour also varies significantly in this category. Gemini surfaces an average of 9.1 brands per prompt compared to Claude's 6.5, while Claude cites 10.7 sources per prompt compared to OpenAI's 3.8. On Gemini, brands compete in a wider field. On Claude, the opportunity is citation breadth. Treating all four platforms as equivalent channels leaves coverage gaps that a more targeted approach would close.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	2.7%	0.5%	1.6%	0.9%	1.4%
Trade	25.7%	16.2%	18.3%	22.9%	20.8%
Review	4.2%	7.2%	4.3%	8.3%	6%
Corporate	52.6%	50.5%	45%	42.7%	47.7%
Press Release	1.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.6%
Social	0.6%	4.4%	10.1%	0%	3.8%
Forum	0.1%	2.7%	3.4%	2.1%	2.1%
Other	12.6%	18.3%	17%	22.6%	17.6%
General Reference	2.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.9%



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	6.5	6.1	7.9	5.3	6.5
Avg Citations/Prompt	4.1	7.2	5.2	11.5	7
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

Telecommunications has the highest trade press citation rate of any industry at 23.5%, meaning nearly one in four citations is drawn from specialist trade media. In a category defined by technical complexity and regulatory change, industry publications carry real authority with AI engines. For communications teams in this sector, a sustained trade media strategy is not a visibility tactic. It is embedded in how AEO engines build their responses.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	7.6%	0.5%	2.6%	1.2%	2.9%
Trade	25.7%	19.3%	26.3%	23.6%	23.5%
Review	2.7%	8.7%	6.3%	11.1%	7.2%
Corporate	46.2%	51.7%	40.2%	43%	44.9%
Press Release	2.4%	0%	0%	0.1%	0.6%
Social	0.9%	3.3%	7.9%	0.1%	3.1%
Forum	0.9%	1.6%	2.8%	1.7%	1.8%
Other	13.6%	14.8%	14%	19.3%	15.3%
General Reference	2.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.9%

Performance is the dominant recommendation driver at 88.7% across all four engines, reaching 92.9% on Perplexity. Brands are chosen for what they deliver. Technical capability, network reliability evidence, and outcome-based proof points are the assets most likely to drive AEO inclusion. Reputation plays a supporting role, but the performance narrative must lead.

Review citations are notably elevated on Perplexity (8.7%) and Claude (11.1%). Consumer and professional reviews carry meaningful weight on these platforms, and PR teams actively managing their review presence may be building a citation footprint that outperforms any single piece of earned media coverage.



TRAVEL

Industry Overall

Metric	OpenAI	Perplexity	Gemini	Claude	Avg. Across All
Avg Brands/Prompt	6.5	8.1	12.9	6.9	8.6
Avg Citations/Prompt	4	7.9	5.3	11.6	7.2
Top Citation Source	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	Corporate	
Top Rec. Factor	Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance	

With 8 brands and 7 citations per prompt, the Travel industry is closer to the overall average with a slightly higher brand count per prompt. However, there is a clear outlier among media sources, with third-party content accounting for 20% of citations across all engines.

This divergence is a meaningful signal for Travel brands prioritizing AI visibility: independent third-party mentions across news, podcasts, YouTube videos, etc., carry considerable AEO weight, unlike any other category apart from corporate.

Citation Breakdown

Type Citation Source	OpenAI %	Perplexity %	Gemini %	Claude %	Avg. Across All
Major	16.2%	1.9%	4.8%	5.6%	6.6%
Trade	6.5%	4.6%	8.7%	6.7%	6.4%
Review	1.5%	6.6%	5.9%	7.3%	5.2%
Corporate	55.6%	64.1%	50.5%	54.6%	54.4%
Press Release	1.2%	0.5%	0.2%	1%	0.7%
Social	0.3%	1.3%	3.6%	0.1%	1.3%
Forum	0.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.9%	1.2%
Other	18.5%	19.6%	25.1%	22.8%	20.9%
General Reference	10.3%	0.3%	1%	1.5%	3.3%

Gemini surfaces an average of 12.9 brands per prompt in Travel and Tourism, compared to OpenAI's 6.5 and Claude's 6.9. The category is a high-density environment on Gemini and a considerably narrower one on the other three engines. For brands with audiences that skew toward Gemini, appearing in a list of 13 brands requires a different approach than securing a position in a shortlist of 6 or 7. Understanding which engine your audience actually uses in this category directly shapes how you define meaningful AEO visibility and what it takes to achieve it.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR PR TEAMS IN THE AEO ERA

The survey data is direct:

46%

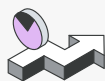
of PR professionals consider AI visibility a critical or high priority



yet brands rate their current AI visibility at 5.5 out of 10 and

5.6

out of 10 in AI portrayal accuracy



The gap between strategic priority and current performance is the single clearest opportunity in this report.

What the research data reveals is not just that a gap exists, but exactly what is driving it and, by extension, what can close it. The findings point to five specific opportunities that PR and communications teams can act on now.

Measure AI Visibility with The Right Tools

The survey confirms that most teams are monitoring

~62%

checking at least monthly



But what they are tracking and how they are acting on it remains underdeveloped.

PR teams need purpose-built tools that track whether a brand appears in AI answers to relevant queries, which engines surface the brand most frequently, which sources are cited when the brand is mentioned, how competitors are positioned in the same answers, and whether the portrayal is accurate relative to intended messaging.

The brands that invest in this infrastructure now, while AEO measurement is still nascent, will be the ones with actionable data when it becomes standard practice across the profession.

Identify And Invest in AI Influential Channels

Not all coverage carries the same weight in AI-generated answers, and the outlets that drive AI visibility are not always the ones that have historically topped a PR team's target list. Trade publications are a strong example of this, consistently ranking as the second most-cited category across all four engines, averaging 12.4% of citations and reaching over 20% in Finance and Telecommunications. The outlets that influence AI answer engines may vary significantly by industry, platform, and query type.

This is where the right tool and measurement strategy become essential. PR teams need visibility into which outlets and source types AI engines are actually citing in their specific sector so that they can prioritize accordingly. Strategies built around that intelligence will consistently outperform those built on assumptions carried over from traditional media measurement.

Build Performance-Forward Content That AI Engines Can Cite

~79%

of brand recommendations driven by performance across all four engines



The content most likely to trigger AEO inclusion is evidence-based: case studies, benchmark comparisons, third-party performance data, and measurable outcomes. Brand narrative and values-based messaging have a role to play, but they should be built on a foundation of demonstrable results.

Reputational signals matter more in specific sectors, such as Healthcare, Entertainment, and Education, where reputation accounts for 20% or more of recommendations. PR teams in those industries should combine outcome-based content with authoritative earned coverage and third-party validation.



Develop a Platform-Specific AEO Strategy

The data makes clear that a single AEO strategy will not perform equally across all four engines. PR professionals who know which platforms their audience relies on and tailor their strategy accordingly will have a meaningful advantage over those treating all four engines as the same.

Brands need to identify the specific platforms most relevant to their audience and invest in a genuine understanding of how they source, cite, and recommend brands in their specific industry. And this would be a continuous exercise, as AI answer engines evolve and the citation behaviours and source preferences that hold today may shift as these platforms update their models and expand their capabilities.

Purpose-built tools that monitor how your brand is represented across AI engines are essential to keeping pace, allowing communications teams to benchmark performance, identify shifts in visibility, and adjust strategy to ensure presence.

The findings in this report point to a clear next step for PR. Understanding how AI answer engines discover, cite, and recommend brands is crucial to remaining visible and driving conversation around your brand. And it demands purpose-built technology to execute on.

VISIBILITY INTELLIGENCE

AI Visibility, Made Measurable

Nearly half of PR professionals consider AI visibility a critical priority, yet most are working without the data to act on it. With an average of 7.5 brands named per AI answer, every prompt is a competitive edge. Every citation is a signal. And right now, most PR teams are flying blind.

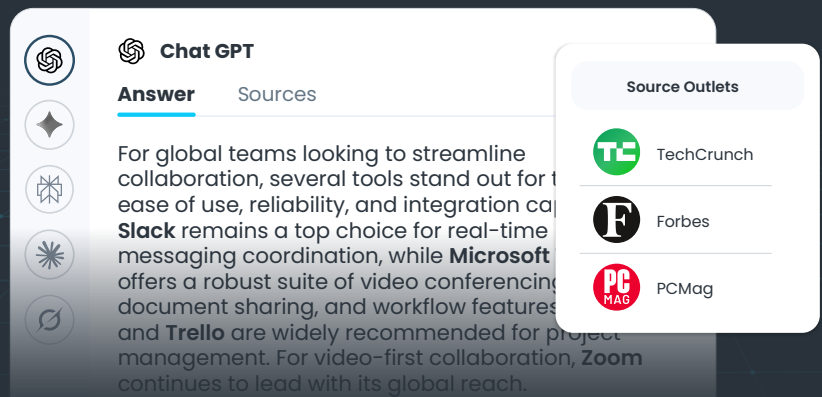
Agility's Visibility Intelligence changes that. Built for PR, brand, and communications teams operating in an AI-first discovery environment, it provides a structured, real-time view of brand presence, reputation accuracy, and source influence across all major AI platforms.

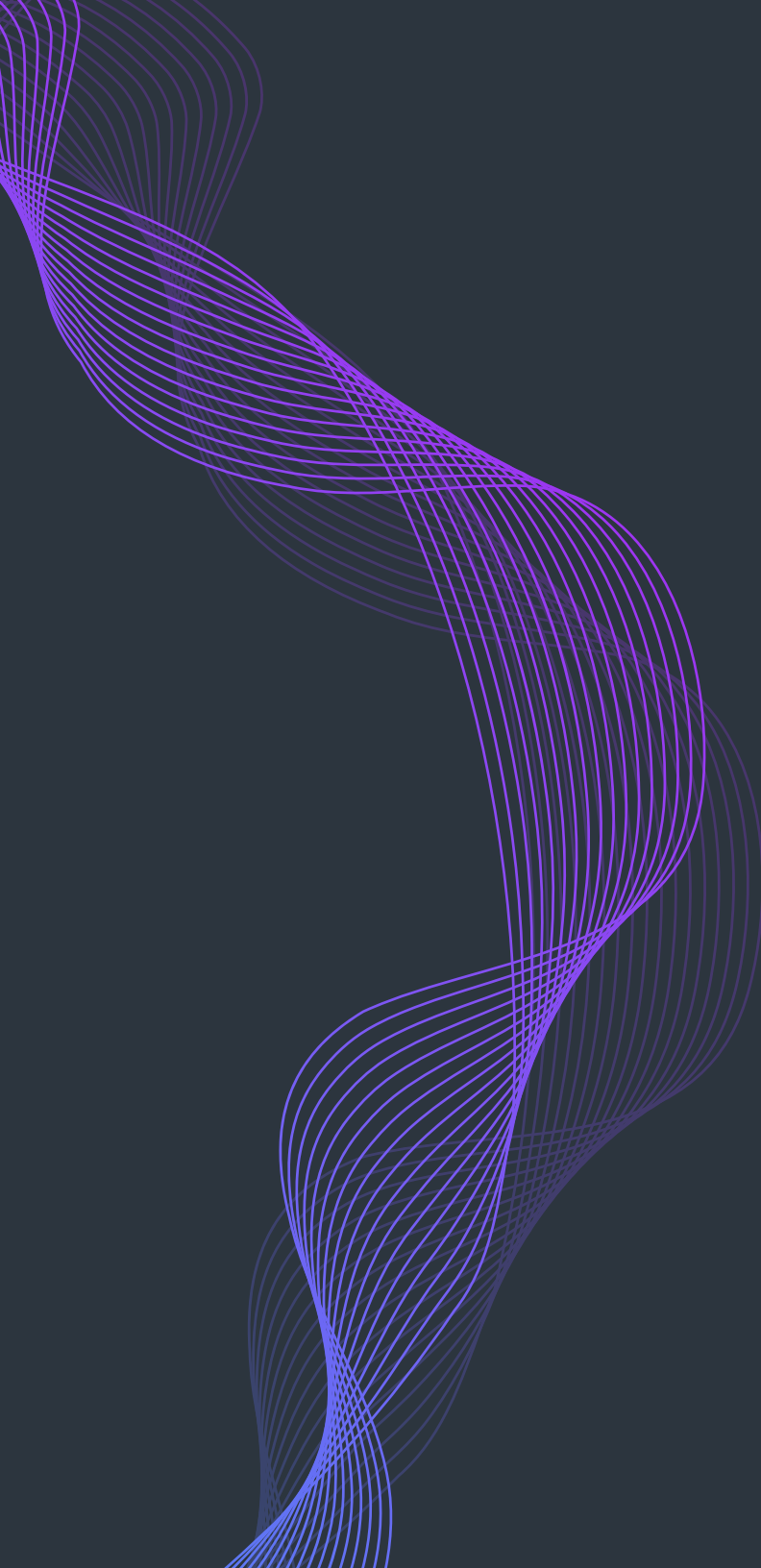
With Visibility Intelligence, PR and communications teams can:

- ✦ Know where their brand is being surfaced across major AI answer engines
- ✦ Understand how AI platforms are defining their brand, and whether that definition matches the intended narrative
- ✦ Identify the specific sources and outlets that carry real influence over AI citations
- ✦ Turn that intelligence into targeted media outreach, directly within the Agility platform

As the next visibility frontier, AEO requires a deeper understanding of AI answer engines, a strategic communication and content approach, and accurate measurement to continue refining your strategy. *Visibility Intelligence gives PR teams all three.*

Best collaboration tools for global teams?





CONCLUSION

The 2026 State of AI Brand Visibility research reveals a profession at a genuine inflection point. AI answer engines have become primary discovery channels for millions of consumers and professionals, yet the signals they trust most diverge substantially from the channels traditional PR has optimized for.

The data is consistent across 24,480 prompt data: performance-based content is what gets brands cited, corporate and trade web presence is what gets brands sourced, and the rules change meaningfully by industry and engine. The brands that will hold their ground in AI-generated answers are the ones deliberately building communications ecosystems that meet those criteria.

For PR and communications leaders, the conclusion is both a challenge and an opportunity. The profession already owns the relationships, the earned media channels, the content expertise, and the strategic positioning to influence how AI engines discover and represent brands. What it needs now are measurement tools, strategic frameworks, and organizational commitment to apply those assets to this new channel.

Teams that expand their strategy to include AEO visibility, build performance-forward content ecosystems, invest in trade and corporate web presence, and monitor their brand's AI footprint will be the ones defining what modern communications leadership looks like in the years ahead.

About Agility PR Solutions

Agility PR Solutions offers a top-rated AI-powered PR platform that helps communications teams monitor, measure, and act on their brand's presence across today's most influential media channels. Recognized across the industry for its ease of use, measurable ROI, and innovation, Agility equips agencies and brands with the tools they need to generate meaningful coverage, prove impact, and guide decision-making.

As AI answer engines become a primary discovery channel for brands, Agility's Visibility Intelligence enables PR and communications teams to track how their brand is represented across leading AI platforms, benchmark performance, and build a stronger, more measurable presence across major AI answer engines.

[Learn More](#)

