Marketing Highlights

The Top Marketing Insights and Takeaways from IFA 2026

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SEE TAKEAWAYS →

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AI-Powered Discovery: AI Summarizes What Already Exists

It does not invent opinions about your brand. If you don't like how you're being described, the fix is to improve the inputs.
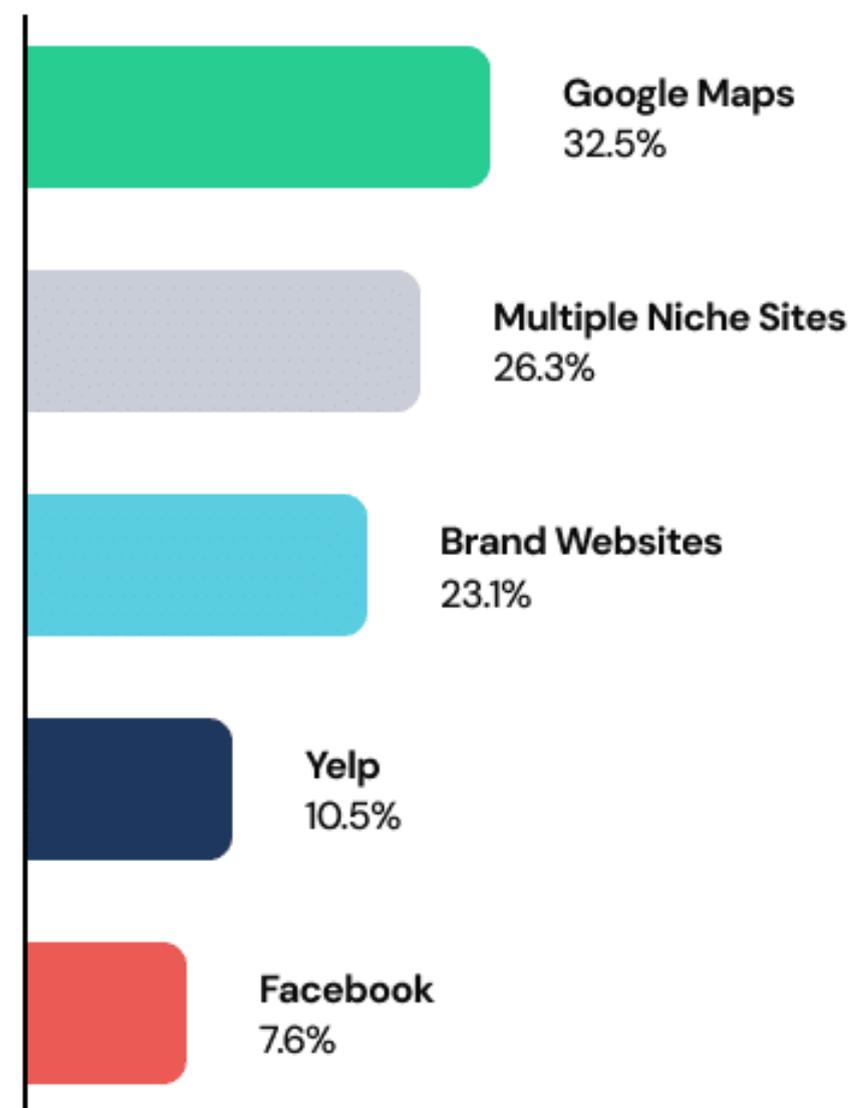
AI Didn't Change the Sources. It Changed the Weights.

AI still pulls from the same core sources: website, listings, reviews, CRM, ads. What changed is how those signals are evaluated together.

If one source is misaligned, it impacts the entire ecosystem. Managing these in separate tools creates risk, as platforms now expect alignment across systems. That expectation is what exposes fragmentation.

Top LLM Sources for Local Queries

- **Google Maps** 32.5%
- **Multiple Niche Sites** 26.3%
- **Brand Websites** 23.1%
- **Yelp** 10.5%
- **Facebook** 7.6%

Source: SOCi 2026 LVi Report

Top 5 Local Intent Signals

Google Business Profile (GBP) → Serves as the real-time source of local, entity-based information. As AI search moves towards generative, zero-click answers, LLMs rely on GBP to confirm a business's legitimacy, relevance, and accuracy.

Review and Sentiment → AI models read the actual text of reviews to find specific semantic keywords (e.g., "fast service," "cleanest gym") to match conversational queries.

Reddit → Establish your brand, reply to negative posts, and post resources about your brand.

Location Pages → Every page needs consistent NAP data, service descriptions, and geographic identifiers. Implement LocalBusiness, FAQ, Review, and Service schema on every location page. Add 4–6 high-intent FAQs per service: pricing, timelines, service areas, qualifications, and what to expect. This is the machine-readable layer AI trusts.
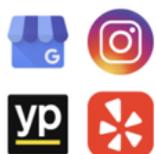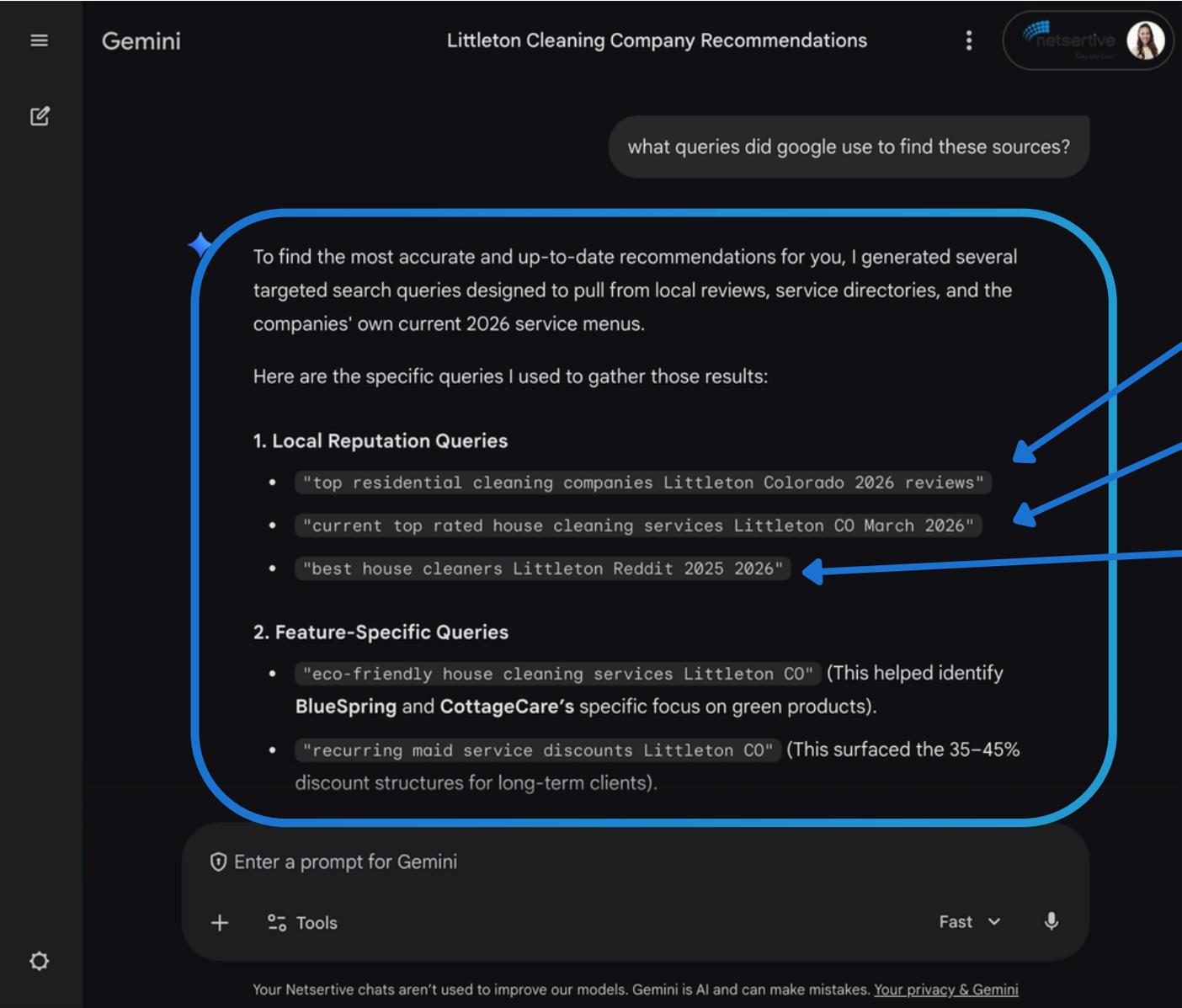
Listings → Google Business Profile, Bing, Apple Maps, Yelp, and industry directories must all match. Inconsistencies signal unreliability. See first GBP tip 🙂

Reverse-Engineer AI Recommendations

How do you get shown more? Understand LLM sources and queries for a window into this process.

Local Reviews

Top Rated Sources

Reddit

Reddit Significantly Impacts AI-Driven Search

Provides authentic, real-time, user-generated content that models like Google and Perplexity use to generate answers.

- **High Citation Rate**: Reddit is increasingly being cited in AI Overviews, with studies showing it appears in roughly 21% of Google AI Overviews and nearly 50% of Perplexity searches.
- **Trust and Authenticity**: AI models are prioritizing Reddit because it offers "brutally honest," peer-level insights, making it a trusted source for product recommendations, troubleshooting, and niche advice.
- **Partnership with Google**: A $60 million deal allows Google to use Reddit data to train its AI models, further cementing its presence in search results.
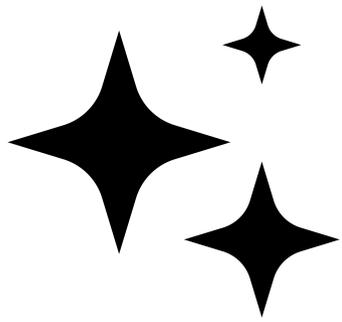
Additional AI Tips and Tricks

- **On Point Branding** → Upload documents such as your brand guidelines, voice and positioning, to generate on-brand copy and content.
- **Automate for Efficiency** → Streamline time-intensive tasks through automation, to allow your team to concentrate on strategic and critical thinking. For example, look for an AI program (like the vendor Harmonize mentioned) to help synthesize all the different data points from various partners and platforms for efficient data clean up.
- **Monitor Your Brand Online** → Explore the development of AI agents to monitor your brand online and identify any negative branding present.
- **Start with the End in Mind** → Always start by defining your core initiatives and problems you are looking to solve, which will then help you better evaluate the AI tools and solutions that exist to best solve that problem.

Beyond the Algorithm: Returning to the Roots of Local Growth

- **The Retro Pivot: Break Through Digital Saturation** → Prioritize high-touch, "analog" tactics like direct mail and grassroots marketing to bypass hyper-saturated digital channels where consumers are increasingly tuned out.

- **Institutional Wisdom: Mine Your Legacy Assets** → Reconnect with the foundations of your business by interviewing long-term franchisees and customers to identify the specific, human-centric drivers of satisfaction that data alone cannot capture.

- **System-Wide Authenticity: Scale the Core Truth** → Ensure long-term franchise success by ruthlessly doubling down on your brand's "why" and maintaining an authentic, human-led identity that remains consistent across every location. This can be both your original brand's mission or an evolution to meet the demands of today's consumer.

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When adopting new technology like AI, you must balance urgency with staying true to your brand and ensuring your franchisees are brought along the journey through proper communication and education.

Stacey Leger
Director of Marketing
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Try talking to AI while your driving, to use it like a personalized tutor for interactive learning instead of listening to a podcast (original tip from Scott Klososky).

Jill Sullivan
Director of Marketing
My Salon Suite

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Use Google Business Profile (GBP) posts to improve local SEO. In general, search engines and LLMs look for authentic, user-generated content, which means the quality of inputs locally matters more than ever.
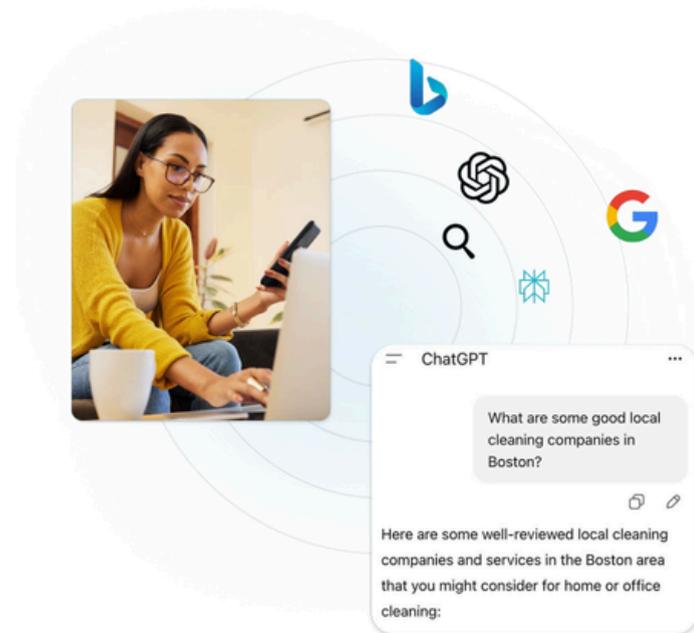
Anne Mejia
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The State of **AI-Powered** Search

Navigating the Shift From Search Rankings to AI-Powered Answers

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