



How AI Is Changing Local Search Marketing in 2026

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Netsertive: Take Control of Your Brand at the Local Level

- Deep expertise in localized digital marketing, including paid media, organic/SEO, and web solutions
- Facilitated \$2 billion in media spend through our platform
- Award-winning brand and location support with named account managers
- Experience driving success for over 100 multi-location brands

Agenda

1. What's Changed in Search
2. What's Staying the Same
3. Key Priorities: Content
4. Key Priorities: Technical Foundations
5. What you should (and shouldn't) do
6. Questions

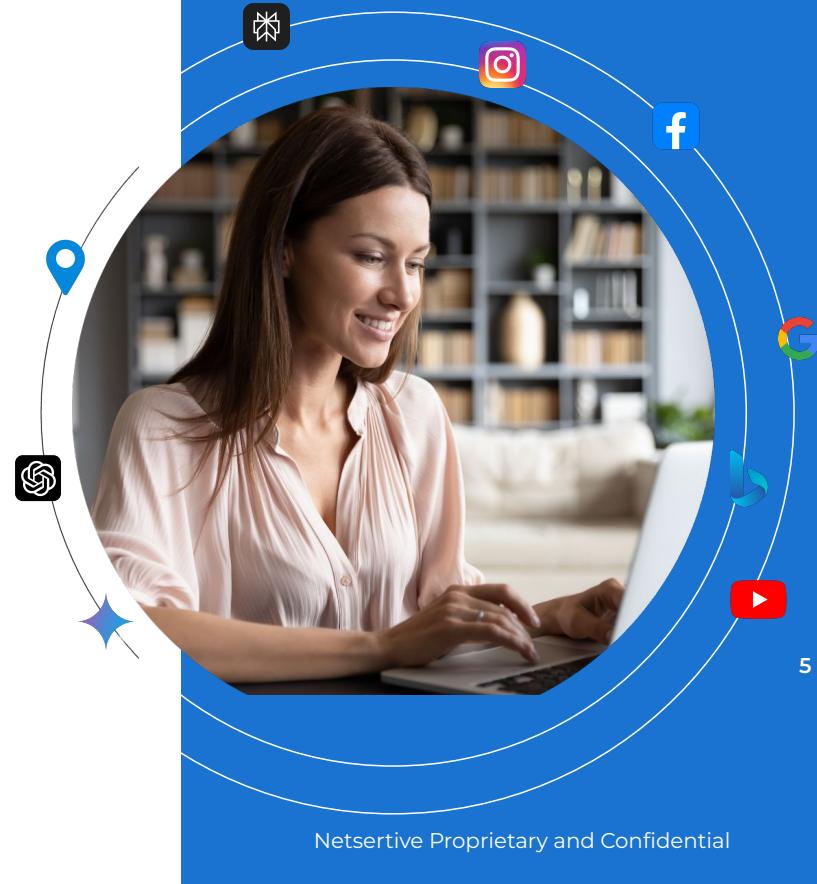
The way people search has changed...

- ★ They're asking AI like ChatGPT and Perplexity.ai to make recommendations
- ★ Websites need to deliver fast answers for both impatient people and SEO/AI crawling bots
- ★ You need to be able to make changes quickly and stay relevant



AI Search Stats

- ★ AI Mode sessions last 4 minutes 37 seconds, significantly longer than standard search ⁽¹⁾
- ★ Generative search queries average 23 words vs. 4 in classic search ⁽²⁾
- ★ AI Overviews reach 2 billion monthly users worldwide ⁽³⁾



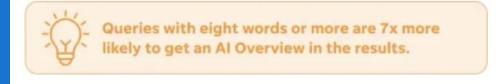
Why We Need Change

- ★ Organic click-through rates (CTR) dropped 18 -40% for many websites ⁽⁴⁾
- ★ 60% of queries now end in zero-click answers ⁽⁵⁾
- ★ Users click on links in search 47% less when an AI Overview is present in the Google SERPs
- ★ Gen Z completes 31% of their searches on AI platforms ⁽⁷⁾

Google AIO paid and organic CTR trends

-via Seer Interactive

Month/Year	Organic CTR without AIO	Organic CTR with AIO	Paid CTR without AIO	Paid CTR with AIO
Jan '25	3.97%	0.64%	17.24%	6.56%
Dec '24	4.71%	0.71%	13.57%	6.95%
Nov '24	3.35%	0.76%	15.05%	8.21%
Oct '24	2.97%	0.84%	20.11%	9.15%
Sept '24	3.13%	0.97%	20.23%	9.53%
Aug '24	2.78%	0.89%	21.06%	8.92%



The Bright Side

- ★ Brands optimizing for AI citation saw a 25% lift in visibility⁽⁸⁾
- ★ Optimized data can increase citation likelihood by up to 40%⁽⁹⁾
- ★ Local businesses may show up more often due to long form queries⁽¹⁰⁾



Before AI Search

- ★ People search to solve real problems, not type keywords
- ★ Brands that win give clear, specific answers
- ★ Trust still drives decisions (reviews & reputation)
- ★ Relevance still matters (right person, right moment)

After AI Search

- ★ People search to solve real problems, not type keywords
- ★ Brands that win give clear, specific answers
- ★ Trust still drives decisions (reviews & reputation)
- ★ Relevance still matters (right person, right moment)

Technical Foundations

Dimension	ChatGPT
When it uses training data	By default for general knowledge, reasoning, writing, frameworks, and stable concepts
When it uses live web search	Only when current, time sensitive, or verifiable facts are required, or when explicitly asked
Search engine or data source	Licensed search providers and large web indexes, often Microsoft powered
Primary goal	Thinking, synthesis, creation, and problem solving
Role of links	Shown only when web search is used
Signals that matter most	Prompt clarity, context, conceptual coherence

Technical Foundations

Dimension	ChatGPT	Perplexity
When it uses training data	By default for general knowledge, reasoning, writing, frameworks, and stable concepts	Minimal, mainly for language generation and structure
When it uses live web search	Only when current, time sensitive, or verifiable facts are required, or when explicitly asked	Almost always, search is the primary mode
Search engine or data source	Licensed search providers and large web indexes, often Microsoft powered	Primarily Bing powered search with live page retrieval
Primary goal	Thinking, synthesis, creation, and problem solving	Research, fact finding, and citation
Role of links	Shown only when web search is used	Central to the experience, shown by default
Signals that matter most	Prompt clarity, context, conceptual coherence	Source relevance, recency, authority

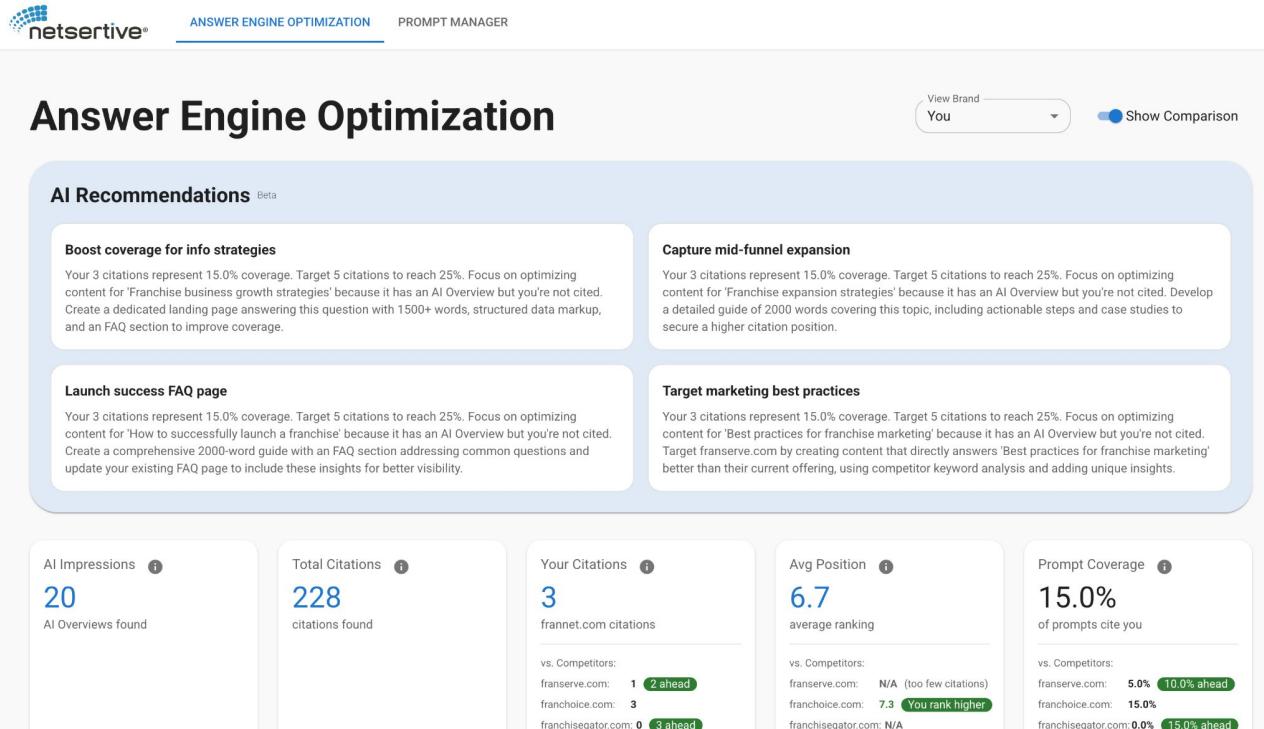
Technical Foundations

Dimension	ChatGPT	Perplexity	Google AI Overviews
When it uses training data	By default for general knowledge, reasoning, writing, frameworks, and stable concepts	Minimal, mainly for language generation and structure	Used only to generate summaries, not to decide what content appears
When it uses live web search	Only when current, time sensitive, or verifiable facts are required, or when explicitly asked	Almost always, search is the primary mode	Always, fully grounded in live search results
Search engine or data source	Licensed search providers and large web indexes, often Microsoft powered	Primarily Bing powered search with live page retrieval	Google Search index, Knowledge Graph, structured data
Primary goal	Thinking, synthesis, creation, and problem solving	Research, fact finding, and citation	Fast orientation and explanation inside search
Role of links	Shown only when web search is used	Central to the experience, shown by default	Present but secondary to the overview
Signals that matter most	Prompt clarity, context, conceptual coherence	Source relevance, recency, authority	SEO signals, authority, freshness, structured data

Technical Foundations

Dimension	ChatGPT	Perplexity	Google AI Overviews	Traditional Search
When it uses training data	By default for general knowledge, reasoning, writing, frameworks, and stable concepts	Minimal, mainly for language generation and structure	Used only to generate summaries, not to decide what content appears	Not applicable, no training based reasoning
When it uses live web search	Only when current, time sensitive, or verifiable facts are required, or when explicitly asked	Almost always, search is the primary mode	Always, fully grounded in live search results	Always, results come directly from indexed pages
Search engine or data source	Licensed search providers and large web indexes, often Microsoft powered	Primarily Bing powered search with live page retrieval	Google Search index, Knowledge Graph, structured data	Google or Bing index depending on engine
Primary goal	Thinking, synthesis, creation, and problem solving	Research, fact finding, and citation	Fast orientation and explanation inside search	Discovery and navigation to relevant pages
Role of links	Shown only when web search is used	Central to the experience, shown by default	Present but secondary to the overview	Links are a primary goal/result
Signals that matter most	Prompt clarity, context, conceptual coherence	Source relevance, recency, authority	SEO signals, authority, freshness, structured data	Keywords, backlinks, authority, freshness, relevance

AEO Assessment: Measuring Your AI Search Readiness



The screenshot shows the netsertive AI Recommendations dashboard for Answer Engine Optimization. The top navigation bar includes the netsertive logo, 'ANSWER ENGINE OPTIMIZATION' (underlined), and 'PROMPT MANAGER'. A dropdown menu 'View Brand' is set to 'You', and a 'Show Comparison' button is visible. The main section is titled 'Answer Engine Optimization' and contains the 'AI Recommendations' (Beta) section. This section lists four AI-generated recommendations:

- Boost coverage for info strategies**: Your 3 citations represent 15.0% coverage. Target 5 citations to reach 25%. Focus on optimizing content for 'Franchise business growth strategies' because it has an AI Overview but you're not cited. Create a dedicated landing page answering this question with 1500+ words, structured data markup, and an FAQ section to improve coverage.
- Capture mid-funnel expansion**: Your 3 citations represent 15.0% coverage. Target 5 citations to reach 25%. Focus on optimizing content for 'Franchise expansion strategies' because it has an AI Overview but you're not cited. Develop a detailed guide of 2000 words covering this topic, including actionable steps and case studies to secure a higher citation position.
- Launch success FAQ page**: Your 3 citations represent 15.0% coverage. Target 5 citations to reach 25%. Focus on optimizing content for 'How to successfully launch a franchise' because it has an AI Overview but you're not cited. Create a comprehensive 2000-word guide with an FAQ section addressing common questions and update your existing FAQ page to include these insights for better visibility.
- Target marketing best practices**: Your 3 citations represent 15.0% coverage. Target 5 citations to reach 25%. Focus on optimizing content for 'Best practices for franchise marketing' because it has an AI Overview but you're not cited. Target franserve.com by creating content that directly answers 'Best practices for franchise marketing' better than their current offering, using competitor keyword analysis and adding unique insights.

Below the recommendations, there are five performance metrics:

AI Impressions	Total Citations	Your Citations	Avg Position	Prompt Coverage
20	228	3 frannet.com citations	6.7 average ranking	15.0% of prompts cite you
AI Overviews found	citations found	franserve.com: 1 franchisechoice.com: 3 franchisegator.com: 0	vs. Competitors: franserve.com: 1 franchisechoice.com: 7.3 franchisegator.com: N/A	vs. Competitors: franserve.com: 5.0% (10.0% ahead) franchisechoice.com: 15.0% franchisegator.com: 0.0% (15.0% ahead)

How to Win in Search

Focus 1: Content

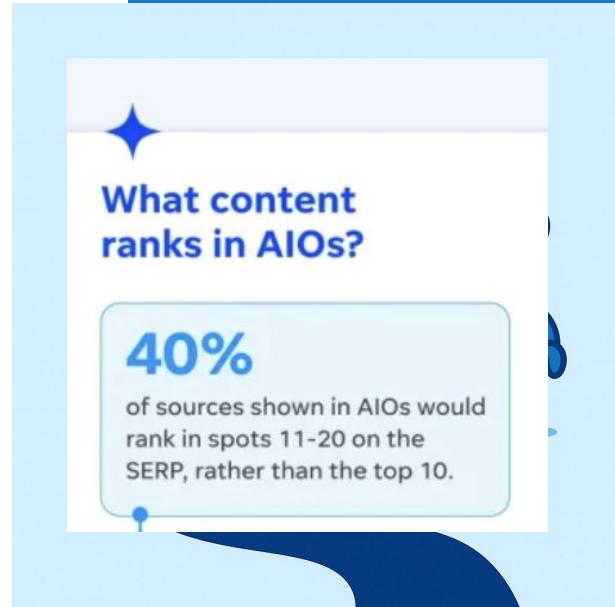
Content is (still) King

- Content is how you answer real questions at scale
- AI and search can't rank what you don't say clearly
- The best content is specific, factual, and useful
- Great content turns keywords into conversations



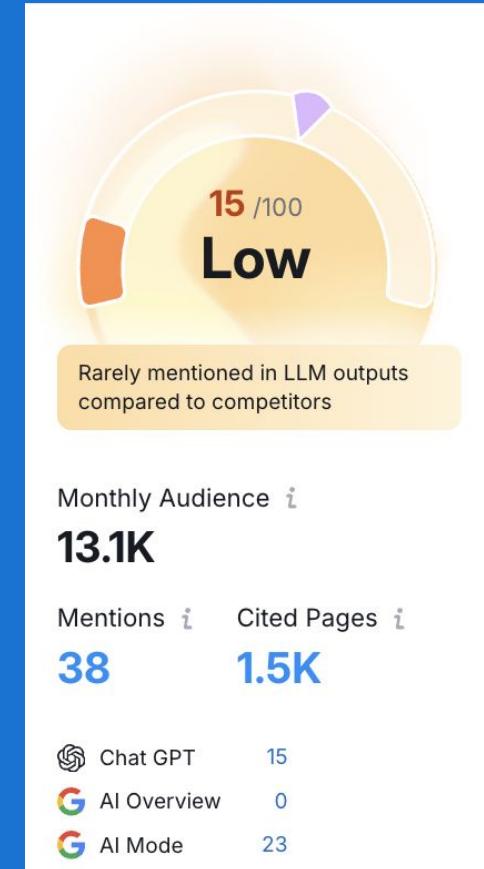
How AI Can Guide Content

- Surfaces strategic opportunities¹⁶
- Shows topics & AI volume where competitors appear more than you
- Shows your top performing topics where AI already “knows” your brand



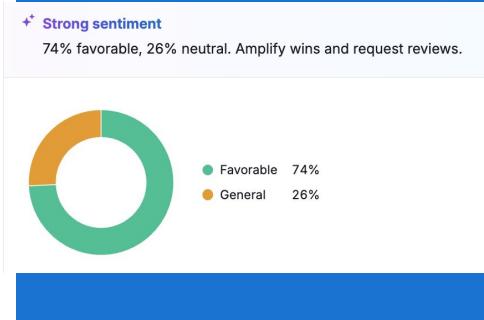
Brand Visibility

- Surfaces strategic opportunities
- Shows topics & AI volume where competitors appear more than you
- Shows your top performing topics where AI already “knows” your brand



Brand Sentiment

- With AI overview data we can review how different LLM's (e.g ChatGPT) are talking about your brand and competitors
- Sentiment trends can help prioritize the content roadmap instead of guessing what to write about



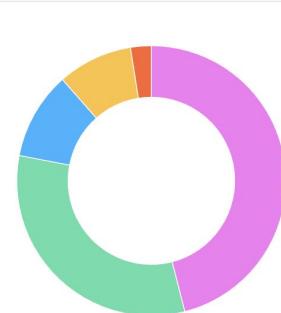
⚡ Areas for Improvement

Higher price point than public/community options (e.g., YMCA)	
Facility quality and water temperature inconsistencies due to rented pools	
Instructor consistency/turnover varies by franchise leading to uneven experience	
Occasional last-minute class cancellations and scheduling disruptions	
Make-up and scheduling flexibility varies by location; availability not always guaranteed	
Some classes use higher ratios (up to 6:1) compared to competitors' 3:1 offerings	
Limited trial-class availability; reliance on risk-free guarantee instead of trials	

User Research

- We can review what users are asking AI
- This helps guide the type of content to create and how to structure it (e.g. Question & Answer vs Blog format)

Query Intent Distribution i



Topic Distribution i



Competitive Positioning

- We can review how AI talks about us versus our competitors
- Ensuring we prioritize key services and areas for growth
- The data tells us that we should double down on safety content and potentially invest in other areas such as convenience

Insights

AI-generated strategy based on the latest data update.

1 Own Survival-First Differentiation

Clarify gentle survival-first vs ISR/competitors; launch SEO comparisons, explainer videos, FAQs, and staff scripts immediately.

2 Sell Flexibility As Value

Prominently market ongoing enrollment, make-ups, sibling-concurrent slots; add real-time slot finder and automation-driven attendance nudges.

3 Lead Comfort-First Segments

Create dedicated pages and protocols for anxious, neurodiverse, and adult beginners; highlight certifications, sensory supports, consistent instructors.

How to Win in Search

Focus 2: Technical Foundations

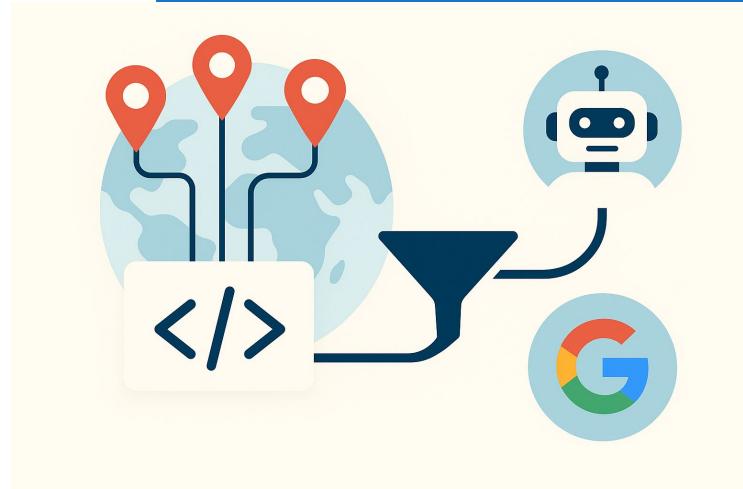
Technical Foundations

- The infrastructure layer under everything else – how your site, location pages, and profiles are technically set up
- All the pieces that make your brand machine-readable for search and AI (schema, sitemaps, clean code, structured location data)
- The way we keep information accurate and in sync across site, maps, and major directories



Why this Matters

- Google explicitly lists “accurate business information” and NAP consistency across the web as key factors for ranking
- Schema makes your locations machine-readable for Google & AI. Rich results from structured data often drive ~20–30% higher CTR ⁽¹¹⁾.



What Schema is

- A shared technical vocabulary that tells search engines what's² on a page in a structured way
- Added as small chunks of code (JSON-LD) that describe things like business, location, services, FAQs, reviews
- Helps Google and AI understand, not just index your pages in order to power rich results and stronger local visibility

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "LocalBusiness",
  "name": "Example Swim School – Downtown",
  "image": "https://www.exampleswim.com/images/pool-downtown.jpg",
  "@id": "https://www.exampleswim.com/locations/downtown",
  "url": "https://www.exampleswim.com/locations/downtown",
  "telephone": "+1-555-555-1234",
  "priceRange": "$$$",
  "address": {
    "@type": "PostalAddress",
    "streetAddress": "123 Main St",
    "addressLocality": "Springfield",
    "addressRegion": "IL",
    "postalCode": "62701",
    "addressCountry": "US"
  },
}
```

Schema Types and AI

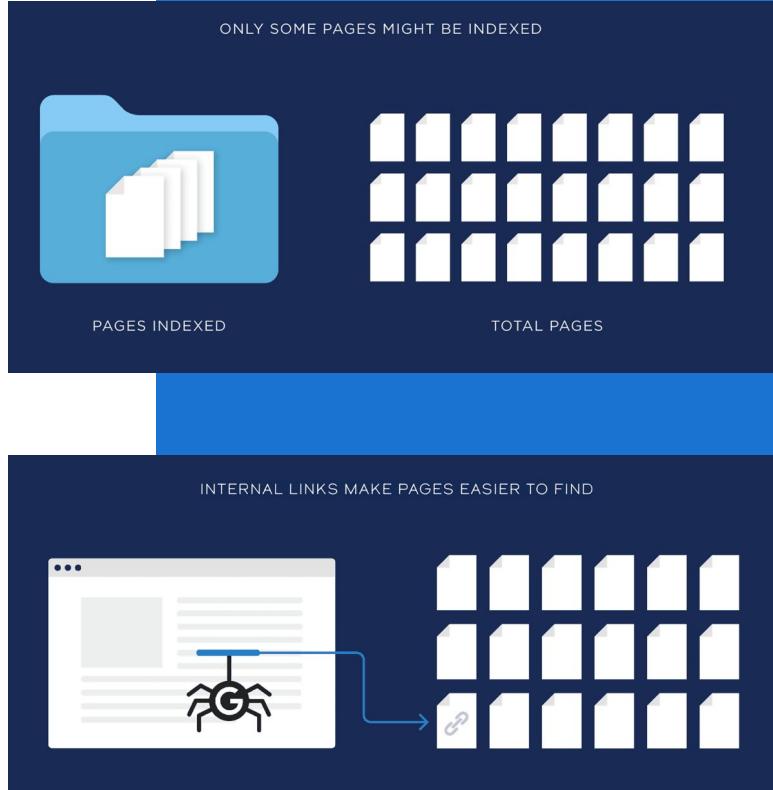
- Added as smallIdentity: LocalBusiness, SportsActivityLocation, EducationalOrganization
- Where & when: PostalAddress, OpeningHoursSpecification
- What we offer: Course / Service
- Trust & answers: Review / AggregateRating, FAQPage

25



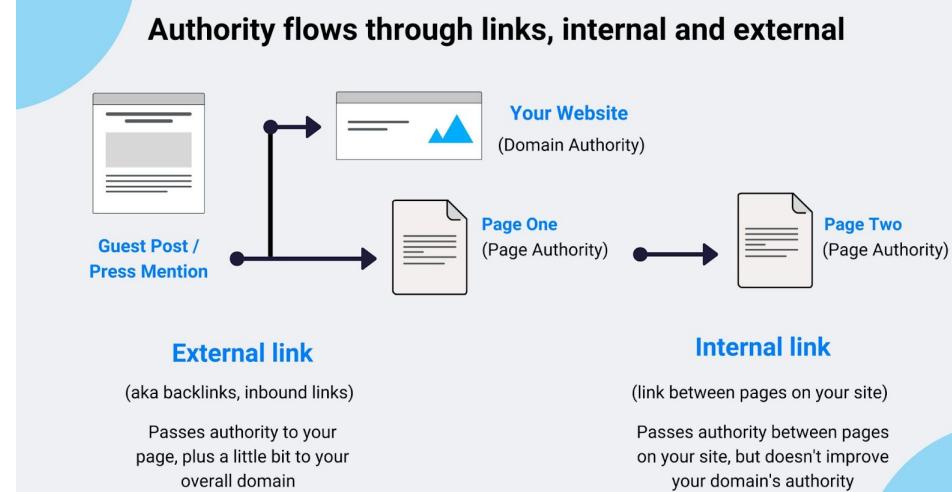
Internal Linking

- Indexing: Make sure every important page can be crawled, rendered, and indexed (no orphan pages, no accidental noindex).
- Location findability: National → region → city → location paths so search and AI can follow the same journey as users.
- Link equity: Use internal links (nav, footers, modules) to pass authority from strong pages to locations



External Links

- Quality links = online referrals. When reputable sites link to you,²⁷ they vouch for your expertise and reliability.
- Domain authority lifts every location
- Strong national authority makes it easier for individual location pages to rank and appear in AI answers.
- Local links prove local relevance. Links from schools, pediatricians, community orgs, and facilities help search/AI see you as the local option.



What you can do

What Not To Do

- Don't chase AI “hacks” or ²prompt tricks instead of fixing basics
- Don't flood the web with low-quality AI blog spam
- Don't stuff keywords into every sentence—AI is good at ignoring that
- Don't ignore Google Business Profile & reviews while obsessing over tiny SEO tweaks



What You Can Do

- Keep key facts accurate everywhere (hours, key services, how to contact, directions)
- Turn common parent questions into FAQs + GBP Q&A
- Share real photos + short success stories
- Build local trust signals through relevant community and industry partners





Q and A



Thank you!

Questions? Contact Jason:
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