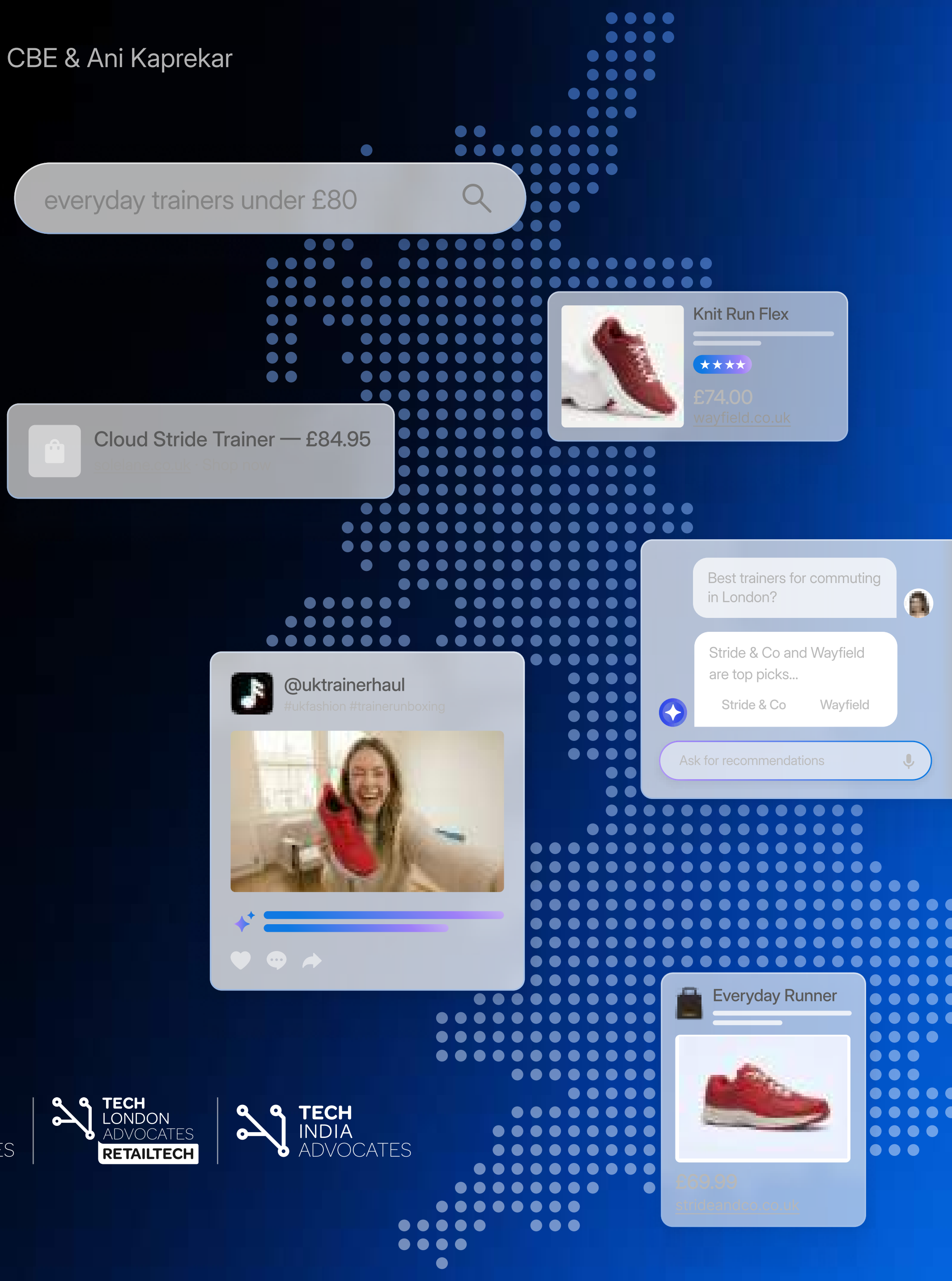
Fynd

Product Discovery in Agentic Commerce

How UK ecommerce brands can win visibility across AI, search, and social platforms

A Whitepaper by Fynd

With a foreword from Russ Shaw CBE & Ani Kaprekar



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Foreword

Recent headlines continue to focus on the high street, but the real shift in British commerce has already happened online. Ecommerce now accounts for more than a quarter of UK retail sales, yet in conversations with leaders across the sector, a consistent theme emerges: many are navigating this transition without a clear line of sight.

The challenge is not a lack of data, but how it is interpreted. Too often, digital performance is still measured using a legacy playbook – tracking rankings as traffic declines, or sessions as revenue plateaus. These metrics were built for a search landscape that no longer reflects how consumers discover, evaluate and purchase today.

One of the key lessons from building the Advocates community is that organisations succeed when they understand the system as a whole. That principle is becoming increasingly relevant. The customer journey is no longer fragmented; it is continuous. Treating SEO, social, and marketplaces as separate workstreams risks optimising individual channels while missing the broader shift in how decisions are made.

The findings in this report offer a timely reality check. Most striking is not only the growth of AI-driven discovery, but the visibility gap it is creating. Today, 26% of UK ecommerce brands do not appear in AI-generated recommendations at all. For many, this is not yet visible in traditional metrics, but it represents lost visibility at the point where decisions are increasingly being shaped.

This report provides a clear and practical starting point for navigating that shift. For leaders considering where to focus next, the priorities are clear: understanding how visibility is changing, and adapting early enough to remain part of the conversation.

Russ Shaw CBE
Founder, Tech London Advocates & Global Tech Advocates

Foreword

India is now one of the world's most consequential digital commerce markets, and it did not get there by following the path that Western retail took. Digital-savvy Indian consumers largely bypassed the high street altogether, moving directly into mobile-first, socially-driven, and increasingly AI-assisted discovery. A generation of shoppers has grown up expecting to find, compare, and buy products through platforms and conversations, not search results pages. With 750 million smartphones and a population that has taken to digital commerce with extraordinary enthusiasm, India is not just a market to sell into. It's a market to learn from.

The India-UK Comprehensive Economic Treaty creates a genuine commercial opportunity for British brands. But a trade agreement can only open a door. What determines whether a brand can walk through it is whether it can actually be found by consumers who discover products in ways that most UK retailers have not yet fully adapted to. For an Indian consumer shortlisting options through a conversational AI tool, or discovering a brand through a creator before ever visiting a website, a retailer with weak AI inclusion and a Google-only visibility strategy is simply not in the room.

That is the problem this whitepaper addresses, and it addresses it with real clarity.

The finding that 26% of UK ecommerce brands do not appear in AI-generated recommendations at all is concerning enough domestically. Viewed against a market like India, where AI-mediated discovery is already the norm, it points to a structural gap that no trade agreement alone can close. Some of the most significant innovation in retail technology over the past decade has come out of India precisely because its market demanded it. The knowledge exchange opportunity that sits alongside the trade opportunity is one UK brands would be wise not to overlook.

What this paper gets right is that it does not offer a single fix. It offers a system, and that is exactly what the moment requires. For any UK brand thinking seriously about international growth, and particularly the India opportunity ahead, this is where to start.

Read it with a pen in hand.

Ani Kaprekar
Co-founder, Tech India Advocates

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Executive Summary

For informational queries that trigger AI Overviews, **organic click-through rate has dropped 61%** since June 2024. If your brand isn't in the AI-generated shortlist, you're not losing a click. You're losing entry to the consideration set entirely.

In 2025, **online sales accounted for 27.4% of total UK retail**, underscoring how central digital commerce has become to the UK economy (ONS). At the same time, AI-powered answer layers and assistants have begun reshaping how consumers discover, compare, and shortlist products. The sessions that reach your site are fewer but more decisive.

To make the stakes concrete: a UK fashion retailer today might first appear in a TikTok creator's haul video, then be compared inside a ChatGPT query ("Best wedding guest dresses under £150"), and only then receive the site visit that registers in Google Analytics. That entire upstream journey is invisible to traditional SEO measurement but it determines whether your product makes the shortlist.

Search is no longer confined to a single engine or a list of links. Consumers now research products across conversational AI platforms, social networks, and video channels. They form opinions before visiting a brand's website. In many cases, the first interaction with a brand takes place within an AI-generated answer rather than on the brand's own website.

This shift does not signal the end of SEO. Rather, it signals its expansion.

Visibility is no longer measured solely by ranking position or traffic volume. It includes being referenced, summarized, recommended, and surfaced across multiple discovery surfaces.

This whitepaper presents a unified perspective. We argue that modern search visibility rests on four interconnected layers:

1. A strong technical and authority foundation
2. Content structured for answers and AI inclusion
3. Presence across the platforms where discovery now occurs
4. Experiences that convert visibility into measurable business outcomes

By 2026, search visibility will no longer be defined by where a brand ranks, but by where and how it appears across AI-mediated discovery platforms.

At a Glance

What has changed in search, where revenue now forms, and what brands must adjust immediately.

01 / Search is no longer a single channel

Customers now discover on social, compare in AI tools, validate on marketplaces, and purchase on-site. Most analytics setups only measure the final click.

02 / Organic traffic is decoupling from revenue

For informational queries, organic CTR has fallen 61% since June 2024. Rankings can hold while traffic drops. The sessions that do arrive convert at higher rates.

03 / AI Overviews are absorbing top-of-funnel demand

Many informational searches are answered directly in search results. The click is no longer guaranteed.

04 / The consideration set forms before your site sees a visit

If your brand does not appear in AI-generated comparisons or recommendations, you are excluded from the shortlist before a user ever reaches you.

05 / Bottom-of-funnel content now drives visibility that converts

AI systems surface brands for comparison and recommendation queries. Clear positioning, differentiation, and proof points determine inclusion.

06 / Product data consistency is now strategic

Conflicting descriptions across your website, marketplaces, and media coverage increase the risk of misrepresentation or omission in AI-generated answers.

07 / SEO remains foundational, but its role has shifted

It is less about maximizing clicks and more about ensuring your content is eligible to appear in AI responses at all.

08 / Attribution models are behind reality

Last-click reporting significantly undercounts social and AI influence. Path analysis and structured AI inclusion tracking are now essential.

09 / Conversion quality matters more than traffic volume

With cart abandonment near 70%, improving PDP clarity, trust signals, and checkout flow often drives more revenue than incremental ranking gains.

10 / Start with measurable fundamentals

Audit structured data on your top SKUs. Build a defined AI inclusion query set. Benchmark performance on your highest-revenue pages. Establish a baseline before scaling efforts.

What most UK mid-market ecommerce brands are getting wrong right now

Most UK retailers in the £10M-£100M revenue band still operate organic growth as if it's a traffic channel:

1. They measure success primarily through rankings and sessions, even as answer layers compress clicks.
2. Their product data is inconsistent across platforms, which makes it harder for AI systems to represent them accurately and confidently.
3. Their category pages are thin grids with little buying guidance, which reduces inclusion in answer systems and weakens conversion when a click does arrive.
4. They have no operational way to track whether AI systems mention them, recommend them, or misrepresent them.

This is leaving revenue on the table because the consideration set is increasingly formed before site analytics ever sees a session.

What this looks like in practice

A large B2B marketplace, with tens of millions of listed products, millions of registered suppliers, and two decades of indexed content built its entire business on being the first place buyers went to find a supplier. For years, that model held.

Then buyers started asking AI assistants for supplier recommendations instead, and the AI returned shortlists that didn't include the platform's listings. Business enquiries fell, supplier connections declined, and yet nothing about the platform had changed: its rankings held, its content was intact, and its catalogue kept growing. What had shifted was where the consideration set was now forming, and the platform simply wasn't part of that conversation.

Scale turned out not to be a defence. AI systems don't simply retrieve the most authoritative source. They retrieve the most interpretable one. That distinction is what this paper is about.

The New Search Reality: From Links to Decisions

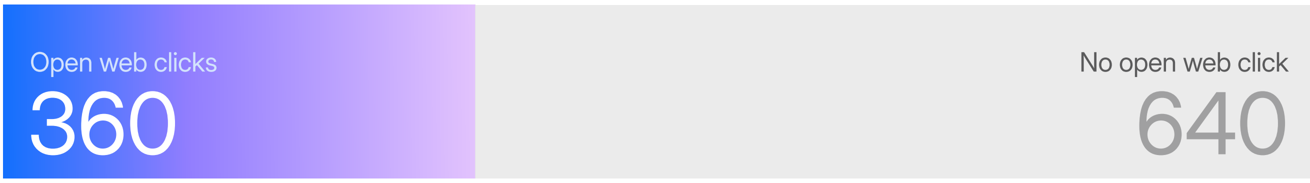
Search engines still crawl and rank pages, but they no longer behave like a consistent traffic router to the open web.

Zero-click is a structural behaviour, not a temporary trend

SparkToro's 2024 analysis found that **only 360 out of every US 1,000 Google searches produced a click to the open web.** Even where Google does send clicks, a greater portion of interactions can remain inside Google properties.

For ecommerce, the implication is not "traffic disappears." It is that the research and shortlist stages compress, and influence moves upstream into answer layers and other ecosystems.

36% of Google searches reach the open web



Based on 1,000 US searches

Source: SparkToro, 2024

Grow and Convert's analysis of client data adds an important nuance to this picture. Across multiple ecommerce accounts, they observed a pattern that historically never occurred together: rankings and conversions rising while organic traffic fell. Their explanation is that AI Overviews are absorbing informational queries and answering them directly, so clicks drop, but the sessions that do arrive carry higher purchase intent and convert better. The traffic decline is concentrated in top-of-funnel, informational queries. Bottom-of-funnel queries, where someone asks for product recommendations or brand comparisons, still produce clicks and are where visibility now converts most reliably.

The timing of these declines also matters. The sharpest drops in clicks and CTR align with March 2025, when Google rolled out AI Overviews more broadly, not with the growth of ChatGPT. Impressions held steady or grew for the same accounts, which rules out users simply migrating away from Google. The problem is not that Google is losing users; it is that Google is answering more queries itself. Brands that optimize only for clicks are measuring the wrong thing.

Answer layers now sit in front of “ten blue links”

Google’s AI Overviews expansion signals that generative summaries are now a default surface, not an experiment. Answer-first interfaces reduce user effort: users can orient, compare, and shortlist without opening multiple tabs.

Assistants are becoming a decision-support layer

Consumers increasingly ask assistants for context-specific recommendations: “best for my needs” rather than “best overall.”

Adobe’s reporting on AI-driven referral traffic demonstrates that assistants already drive real visits and are growing rapidly.

US retail web traffic from AI-driven referrals grew more than twelvefold between July 2024 and February 2025.

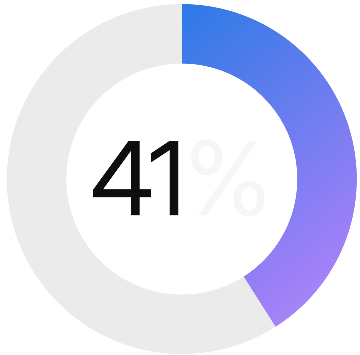
How People Research Products in 2026: A Multi-Platform Pattern

Consumers don’t follow one universal journey. They move to the platform that best answers the question they have at the moment. The following example traces a high-consideration purchase of noise cancelling headphones to show what this looks like in practice.

STEP 01	**Orientation** *What should I consider?*	A user starts on Google and sees an AI Overview summarizing top models, tradeoffs (comfort, battery, mic quality), and general price ranges. This stage reduces effort: the user gets an initial map of the category without opening multiple tabs.
STEP 02	**Comparison** *Which one is right for me?*	The user asks a conversational AI tool to compare two shortlisted models for their specific context, such as commuting and work calls. AI assistants are increasingly used as a decision support layer, not just a Q&A tool.
STEP 03	**Validation** *Can I trust it?*	The user checks reviews on a marketplace to see rating distribution and volume, then scans community discussions to catch real-world issues like durability or comfort after extended use.
STEP 04	**Transaction** *Where do I buy?*	Only after preference is formed does the user search for best price, availability, and return policy.

This pattern explains why discovery now spans multiple surfaces and why a brand can lose consideration long before a user visits the brand website.

Research from Sprout Social finds that **41% of Gen Z users begin information searches on social platforms** rather than traditional search engines, and that TikTok is their top channel for product discovery.



of Gen Z users begin information searches on social platforms

Source: Sprout Social

The Zero-Click Effect and What it Changes in Ecommerce

Zero-click is not just a traffic trend. It changes where influence happens. When search pages and AI answer layers provide enough information to shortlist and compare, the number of site visits required to make a decision drops.

For e-commerce, this has three practical implications:

01 / Shortlists form earlier than your site analytics suggest. If your product is excluded from the AI summary, the user may never reach your product detail page.

02 / Click-based attribution undercounts search influence. You may lose traffic even while your brand is being referenced or compared upstream.

03 / Content and authority signals need to serve two audiences: they must persuade users and also be legible to systems that synthesize answers.

For example

A query like “best stroller for travel” can now produce an AI-generated shortlist with three to five recommendations. If your product is not among them, you are not merely losing a click but an entry into the consideration set. That is the commercial meaning of zero-click in 2026.

Fragmentation: Search Now Takes Place Across Competing Ecosystems

Search is distributed across ecosystems that each play a different role. Google remains the dominant navigation and answer layer. ChatGPT and similar assistants increasingly support comparison and decision framing. Perplexity-style engines compete on citations and research-style summaries. TikTok and Instagram shape discovery through short-form content and creator-led recommendations. Marketplaces serve as validation and transaction engines through reviews, shipping confidence, and price anchoring.

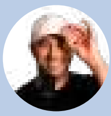
Each ecosystem has different ranking signals, content formats, and trust mechanics. One-size optimization no longer works.

Why Single-Channel SEO Leaves Revenue Behind

A Google-only approach assumes two things: that discovery begins on Google, and that influence is measured by clicks. Both assumptions are weaker in 2026. If consumers discover on social media, compare using AI, and validate on marketplaces, then Google rankings often reflect only the late stage of the journey. By the time a user searches a transactional keyword, preference is frequently already formed.

You can hold rankings and still lose share of consideration upstream. The strategic implication is straightforward: modern search visibility must be treated as an ecosystem strategy, not a channel strategy.

> "AI tools like ChatGPT and Perplexity are replacing Google search as the new front door to commerce, forcing brands to optimize for AI-driven discovery."



Mac King
Entrepreneur contributor

The Optimization Framework

The optimization challenge in 2026 is not that SEO is obsolete. Visibility now shows up in more places and in more formats than rankings alone. A modern strategy needs to perform across three outcomes at once: being discoverable, being usable as an answer source, and being persuasive when a user is ready to act.

This framework organises the work into connected layers, starting with the technical and content fundamentals, then expanding into answer engines, generative systems, and multi-platform discovery. GEO and LLMO are treated as one unified discipline since both address how AI systems retrieve and synthesise content. AISO serves as the overarching execution umbrella.

The Foundation: SEO

Despite rapid advances in AI search interfaces, traditional SEO remains the base layer of discoverability. Search engines still crawl, index, and evaluate content before it can be surfaced in any format. AI summaries, featured snippets, and conversational answers all depend on underlying search infrastructure.

SEO's role has shifted: it's no longer only a traffic acquisition strategy, it's the eligibility layer that determines whether your content can participate in answer systems at all.

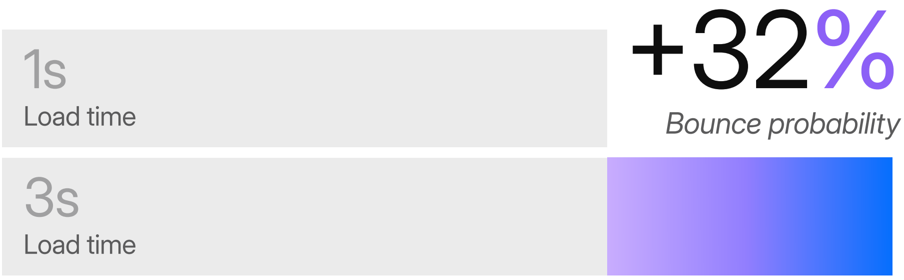
E-E-A-T: The Credibility Layer

E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) is the framework Google uses to evaluate the overall credibility of content and its source. Google's Search Quality Rater Guidelines explicitly identify trust as the most important component. In the AI era, generative systems rely more heavily on content that shows consistent credibility signals across the web. Pages without clear authorship, citations, or topic depth are less likely to be included in AI-generated summaries. E-E-A-T now determines whether your brand is eligible to be synthesized into answers.

Technical SEO: The Infrastructure Layer

Technical SEO establishes accessibility. No matter how authoritative your content is, it cannot rank, be cited, or be summarized if systems cannot reliably access and interpret it.

Core technical requirements include crawlability and indexing (clean XML sitemaps, proper robots.txt configuration, canonical tags, logical internal linking, elimination of orphan pages), structured data to reduce ambiguity and improve machine understanding, and site speed. Google's research shows that increasing page load time from one to three seconds raises the probability of bounce by 32%.



Page Load Time Impact on Bounce Probability
Source: Google

Error management, including clearing 404 pages, shortening redirect chains, eliminating duplicate paths, ensures authoritative pages remain reachable and consistently retrievable. Without this foundation, higher optimization layers cannot function effectively.

AEO: Structuring Content for Answer Surfaces

Answer Engine Optimization focuses on how content is organized, framed, and formatted so that it can be reliably extracted into answer interfaces. The objective is not higher rankings alone but structured clarity. Search and AI systems favour content that mirrors real user questions in headings, provides concise direct answers before elaboration, uses comparison tables where trade-offs matter, separates definitions from commentary, and avoids ambiguity in terminology.

For example

Consider a page targeting “best office chairs for back pain.” A long narrative review may rank, but a page structured with sections such as “Best for Lumbar Support,” “Best for Adjustable Armrests,” and a side-by-side comparison table increases the probability that systems can extract usable passages. The difference is interpretability.

GEO / LLMO: Winning in Generative and LLM-Based Search

Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) and Large Language Model Optimization (LLMO) address the same core challenge: making content synthesizable and retrievable by AI systems. They are treated here as a single discipline because both focus on how LLMs retrieve and incorporate content into generated responses.

Generative systems do not simply rank pages. They retrieve relevant passages, evaluate authority signals, and combine multiple sources into a single response. Visibility becomes a matter of inclusion rather than position.

Instead of asking how to rank first, the question becomes whether your brand is consistently retrievable and credible enough to be incorporated into AI-generated answers.

How AI Systems Select Content

Most generative systems follow a two-step process: retrieve relevant passages based on semantic alignment and authority, then synthesize those passages into a structured response.

Three factors matter most: topical depth (comprehensive coverage increases retrieval likelihood), passage-level clarity (clear headings, concise definitions, and structured comparisons improve extractability), and authority signals (consistent brand mentions, expert backing, and third-party references increase inclusion probability).

For example

A fitness brand that publishes detailed comparisons, cites performance data, and is referenced across reputable sites is more likely to appear in AI-generated responses to queries like "best adjustable dumbbells for small apartments."

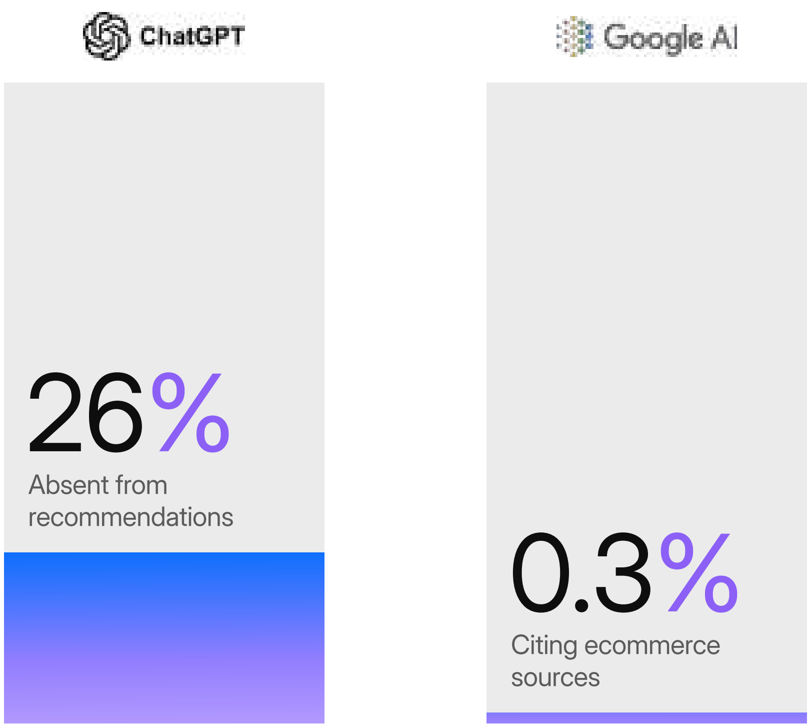
How to Audit Your AI Inclusion

To understand your current presence in AI-generated answers, build a prompt library of 20 to 50 queries matching your top revenue categories. Run them monthly across ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews. For each query, record whether your brand is mentioned, in what position, and whether product attributes are represented accurately. Track inclusion rate over time. This gives you a baseline and a repeatable signal to measure improvement.

LLMO-specific tactics reinforce this: cover related subtopics comprehensively (query fan-out coverage), write self-contained extractable sections, maintain consistent product terminology, and build topic cluster completeness so machines can confidently retrieve and synthesise your content.

When someone searches a top-of-funnel informational query inside an LLM, the AI has little incentive to surface a specific brand. There's no equivalent of a featured snippet or a ranked result that rewards early-funnel content investment the way traditional SEO did. Bottom-of-funnel content is different. When a user asks which product to buy, which brand is best for their use case, or how one option compares to another, AI systems surface specific brands and products. Content that explains your product in concrete detail, who it is for, how it compares to alternatives, and what outcomes customers have seen, is what earns inclusion at the moment decisions are made.

The numbers behind this are stark. Fynd's analysis found that **26% of UK ecommerce brands do not appear in ChatGPT** recommendations at all, and **only 0.3% of Google AI Overviews cite ecommerce sources** directly. Most brands have never measured their AI inclusion rate because they assumed their organic rankings were doing the job. They are not.



UK ecommerce brands absent from ChatGPT recommendations

Google AI Overviews citing ecommerce sources

Source: Fynd

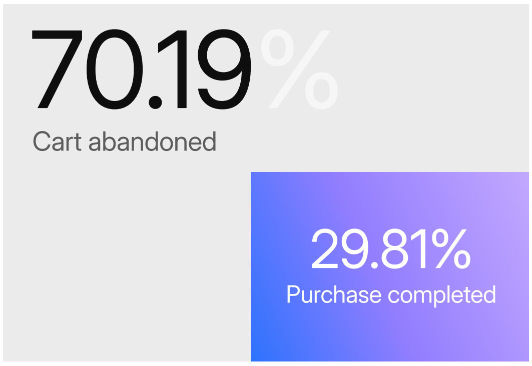
AISO: AI Search Optimization

AISO is the execution umbrella that reflects how search behaves today. It recognizes that AI is no longer a separate layer sitting outside search. It's embedded within it. AISO takes a broader view than GEO alone, covering optimization for AI Overviews within search engines, conversational search interfaces, personalized AI-driven result sets, and context-aware responses.

AI search experiences are increasingly adaptive. Results may vary based on user history, location, device, and behavioral signals, making consistency of brand signals essential. AISO requires strong entity clarity, consistent product data across platforms, structured attributes and metadata, and alignment between on-site content and off-site mentions. If a product is described differently across your website, marketplaces, and media coverage, AI systems may struggle to reconcile those signals.

SXO: Search Experience Optimization

Baymard Institute's aggregated research across 49 studies puts **average e-commerce cart abandonment at 70.19%.** That means even modest improvements in checkout clarity and trust signals can significantly increase revenue without requiring more traffic.



E-commerce Cart Abandonment Rate

Source: Baymard Institute

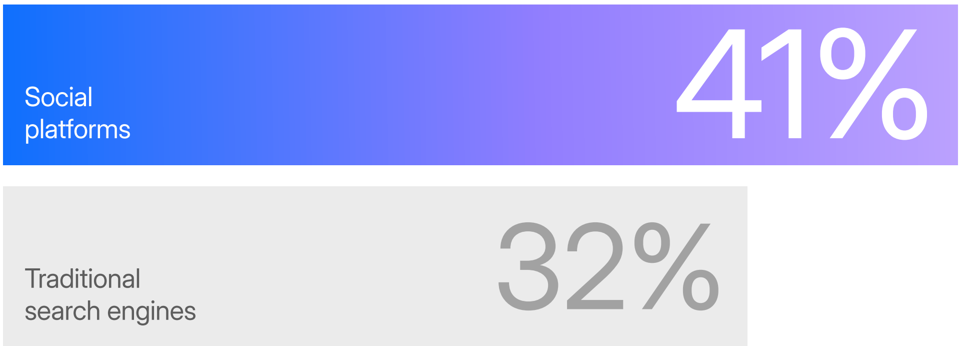
As zero-click behaviour increases, fewer visits carry higher intent. SXO focuses on what happens after visibility is achieved. It sits at the intersection of SEO and user experience: the objective is not simply to attract traffic but to convert and retain it.

The main SXO components include fast load times and Core Web Vitals performance, clear value propositions above the fold, transparent pricing and policies, strong trust signals near decision points, and mobile-first checkout design.

SEvO: Search Everywhere Optimization

Consumers discover, compare, and validate across multiple ecosystems: Google, ChatGPT and other AI assistants, YouTube, TikTok, Reddit, and marketplaces. SEvO recognizes that visibility must extend beyond a single results page.

Sprout Social's research finds that **41% of Gen Z users begin information searches on social platforms, ahead of traditional search engines at 32%.** That shift reflects where early-stage influence now happens.



Where Gen Z begin information searches

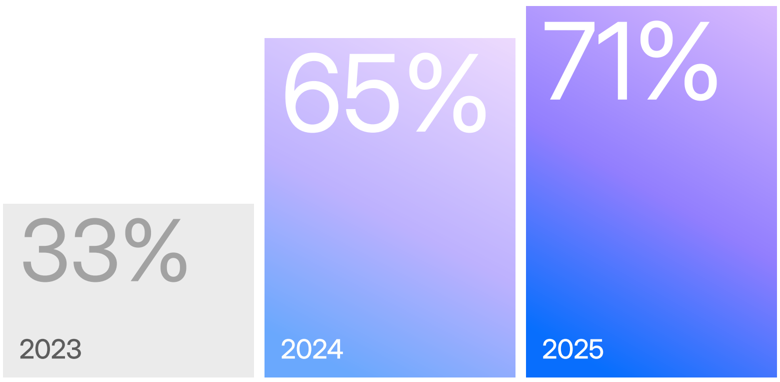
Source: Sprout Social

SEvO work includes optimizing video metadata and transcripts, engaging in relevant community discussions, ensuring marketplace listings are complete and structured, and monitoring AI mentions and citations. The objective is consistent presence across the surfaces where buyers actually search.

AIO: AI-Assisted Optimization Workflows

AIO refers to how organizations use AI internally to scale and improve optimization. Search is evolving rapidly and manual processes alone cannot keep pace. AI tools now support query clustering and intent grouping, automated internal linking suggestions, content gap identification, competitive SERP analysis, and predictive performance modelling.

McKinsey's 2024 State of AI survey found that **65% of organizations regularly use generative AI in at least one business function**, nearly double the figure from ten months prior. **By 2025, that figure had risen to 71%.**



AI adoption in organizations

Source: McKinsey State of AI, 2024

AIO does not replace human strategy. It accelerates execution. Organizations that integrate AI into their optimization workflows adapt faster to shifts in search surfaces.

The Integrated Strategy: How They All Work Together

For e-commerce teams, the growing list of terms can feel like a choice you're supposed to make: should you focus on SEO, or GEO, or AEO, or AISO broadly? You don't need to pick one, because customers do not use one surface. They move across discovery, comparison, validation, and purchase, and each discipline maps to a different part of that decision process. Treating these as separate programmes creates gaps where influence leaks.

For informational queries triggering AI Overviews, **organic CTR dropped from 1.76% to 0.61% between June 2024 and September 2025 which is a 61% decline.** The implication is not that SEO is obsolete: it is that e-commerce brands need an integrated system that wins inclusion, builds trust, and converts efficiently when the click does happen.

Organic CTR for informational queries triggering AI Overviews

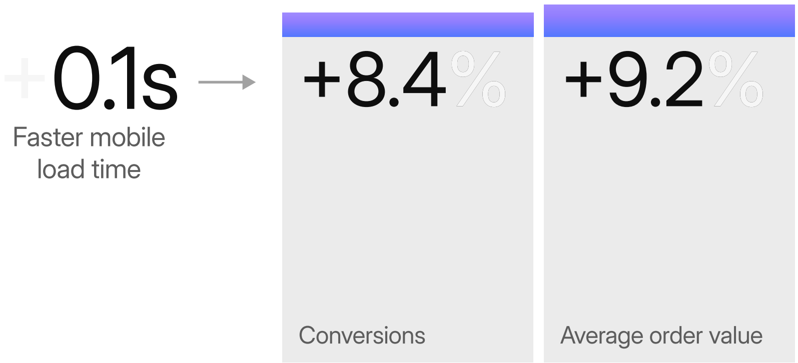
Each Discipline Serves a Specific Moment

SEO makes product and category pages discoverable and trusted. AEO improves how buying guides, FAQs, and category content get lifted into direct answers. GEO and LLMO increase the probability your brand is referenced inside AI-generated comparisons. SEvO extends visibility into the places where discovery starts. SXO converts the demand you capture into revenue. AIO improves the speed and scale of execution across all of the above.

The Layered Approach: Foundation → Enhancement → Expansion

Foundation is the work that makes your catalogue eligible across search, answers, and AI systems: technical SEO, crawlability, internal linking, canonical hygiene, and structured data. For ecommerce, structured product information is especially important because machines need clarity on price, availability, variants, and reviews.

Speed matters here too: a Deloitte study commissioned by Google found that a **0.1 second improvement in mobile site speed correlated with an 8.4% increase in conversions for retail consumers and a 9.2% increase in average order value.**

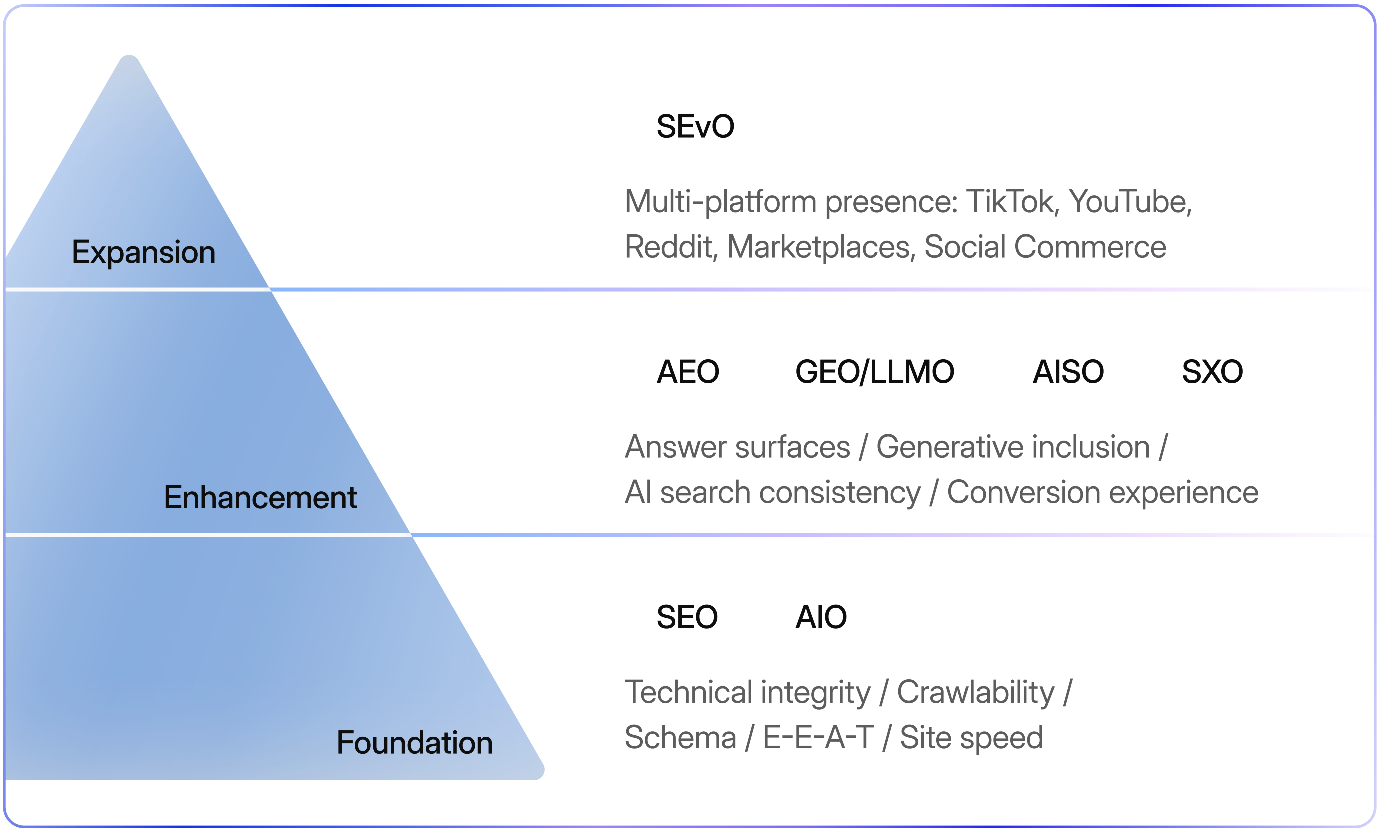


Impact of mobile speed improvements on retail performance

Source: Deloitte (commissioned by Google)

Enhancement improves how your content and product information performs inside answers and AI surfaces. For e-commerce this means upgrading category and editorial content so it becomes extractable: “Best X for Y” pages with clear comparison blocks, FAQ sections that match real buying questions, product attributes in consistent structured formats, and use-case guidance.

Expansion ensures you show up where shoppers actually begin discovery and validation. This is especially important because product discovery has shifted toward social and community environments. If discovery starts elsewhere, a Google-only approach captures demand late after the preference is already formed.



Example: A UK Homeware Retailer at £30M Revenue

The following scenario shows how the integrated framework plays out for a mid-market UK homeware brand. Let's call the brand "Hearthside". Hearthside receives an annual revenue of £30M, a 15,000-SKU catalogue, and has a team that has historically measured success by Google rankings and sessions.

Months 01 – 03

Assessment and Foundation

Hearthside's audit reveals that 40% of its top-selling product detail pages have missing or invalid Product schema, its category pages **average 4.2 seconds LCP** on mobile, and the brand does not appear in ChatGPT responses to queries like "best sofas for small living rooms UK." Non-branded organic search accounts for **only 18% of traffic**, suggesting heavy dependence on branded and paid demand.

Immediate Actions

Structured data corrections on the top 500 revenue-generating SKUs using Google's Rich Results Test (targeting 100% valid Product schema); LCP improvements targeting **sub-2.5 seconds** on top-20 category pages; a baseline AI inclusion audit across **30 priority queries** in ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews.

Months 04 – 06

Core Optimization

Hearthside restructures its top 12 category pages. The sofa category page is rebuilt to include a dimension table, a "will it fit through my door" guide, fabric performance comparisons, and delivery timeline clarity. A "best sofa for small living rooms" guide with comparison blocks is published and internally linked from PDPs. FAQ blocks are added to the 50 highest-traffic categories.

Results by month 6

Featured snippet coverage for target buying queries increases from **11% to 28%.** AI inclusion rate for sofa-related queries rises from **0% to 22%.** Revenue per organic session on restructured categories **improves by 14%.**

Months 07 – 09

AI and Multi-Platform Expansion

Hearthside launches a structured product feed for Google Shopping and Amazon, ensuring consistent naming conventions, variant attributes, and real-time stock data. A content series for YouTube ("Room makeover with [product]") is optimized with keyword-rich descriptions and transcripts. The brand begins engaging in "r/HomeImprovement" and "r/MALELIVINGSPACE" on Reddit with genuine expert answers linking to buying guides.

Results by month 9

AI inclusion rate for priority queries reaches **41%.** Marketplace impressions **increase 60%** following feed improvements.

Months 10 – 12

Scale and Refinement

The comparison guide format is scaled to 40 categories. AI-assisted content refresh triggers are implemented to flag guides older than 6 months for review. Monthly AI inclusion tracking becomes a standing agenda item in the weekly SEO stand-up.

Results by month 12

Hearthside's non-branded organic share has grown from **18% to 31%.** Revenue per organic session is up **22% year-on-year.** The brand appears in AI-generated shortlists for **19 of its top 25** priority category queries.

Practical Implementation Roadmap

Modern search optimization cannot be executed as a one-time project. The goal is to stabilize the foundation first, then build extractability, then expand visibility, and finally scale what works.

Months 01 – 03

PHASE 01

Assessment and Foundation

Current Visibility Audit Across All Platforms

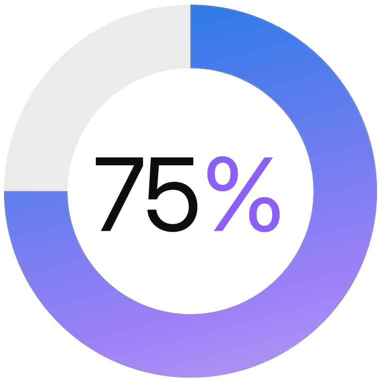
Begin by assessing where your brand influences purchase decisions, not just where it ranks. Audit non-branded search share, category-level discoverability, marketplace visibility, AI-generated comparison inclusion, and social discovery mentions. The objective is to identify where influence is missing.

Technical Infrastructure Requirements

For e-commerce brands, this phase must prioritise structured product schema completeness, Core Web Vitals optimization (targeting sub-2.5 second LCP on top revenue pages), crawl efficiency for large catalogues, faceted navigation control, and redirect and duplicate URL cleanup. Technical instability at scale affects both discoverability and conversion rate.

Content and Authority Gap Analysis

BrightLocal's 2024 consumer survey found that **75% of consumers always or regularly read online reviews** when researching a business. The same trust-driven behaviour applies to ecommerce: buyers consult reviews, comparison guides, and detailed specifications before purchase. Authority gaps generally appear as missing comparison content, weak category-level buying guides, lack of expert-backed information, and thin product copy across variants.



of consumers always or regularly read online reviews

Source: BrightLocal, 2024

Quick Wins

- Run a structured data audit on your top 50 revenue-generating SKUs using Google's Rich Results Test; target 100% valid Product schema.
- Implement review schema on high-traffic pages.
- Add FAQ blocks to your top 10 category pages.
- Improve internal linking between buying guides and product detail pages.

Months 04 – 06

PHASE 02

Core Optimisation

At scale, e-commerce sites frequently suffer from duplicate content due to filtering, orphaned seasonal pages, and inconsistent product naming conventions. Fixing these reduces crawl waste and improves authority distribution across the catalogue.

For AEO

Enhance category pages with structured comparisons. A "Best Espresso Machines Under £500" page should include comparison tables, capacity breakdowns, maintenance requirements, and ideal use-case guidance. This improves both extractability and conversion confidence.

For GEO

Invest in citation-worthy assets: data-driven buying guides, expert-authored content, research-backed product breakdowns. Generative systems are more likely to synthesize structured, well-supported content.

For SXO

Focus on simplified checkout, clear delivery timelines, transparent return policies, and review visibility near decision points. In an AI-compressed research journey, fewer but higher-intent sessions must convert more efficiently.

Months 07 – 09

PHASE 03

AI and Multi-Platform Expansion

Monitor AI-generated product comparisons for inclusion frequency, product positioning, and competitor presence. As AI systems become integrated into browsers and shopping workflows, brands that track answer-surface presence gain insight before traffic patterns change.

Platform-native optimization includes marketplace attribute completeness, optimized video descriptions, structured product feeds, and community engagement. Data consistently shows that younger consumers are increasingly influenced by social discovery before traditional search engagement.

Strengthen passage clarity, topic cluster completeness, consistent product naming, and entity alignment across platforms. LLM-based retrieval systems reward coherent topic architecture.

Months 10 – 12

PHASE 04

Scale and Refinement

Scale high-performing formats: comparison guides, category deep-dives, FAQ clusters, and seasonal collections. Maintain quality standards while increasing production efficiency. Allocate budget to platforms showing measurable assisted revenue impact rather than vanity visibility metrics.

Implement schema validation automation, technical issue monitoring, AI-assisted content refresh triggers, and AI surface tracking dashboards. Shift measurement from traffic alone to revenue per organic session, assisted conversion contribution, non-branded visibility growth, AI inclusion frequency, and conversion rate improvements.

Measuring Success

Most e-commerce teams are still measuring search the way they did in 2019: rankings, sessions, conversions. The problem is that a lot of the influence now happens before any of those things are recorded. A shopper sees your product in an AI summary, compares it on ChatGPT, and only then visits your site. That entire journey is invisible to traditional measurement. Here's what to track instead.

Months 1 – 6

START HERE

Your First-Priority Metrics

For teams with limited analytics resource, begin with four metrics that directly connect discovery to revenue:

Revenue per organic session

The single most important downstream indicator. Tracks whether SEO effort is translating to commercial outcomes, not just traffic.

Non-branded visibility share

Percentage of impressions and clicks from queries that don't include your brand name. A low share signals over-dependence on existing demand; growth here indicates genuine discovery.

AI inclusion rate for your top 20 SKUs

How often your products appear when you run a monthly prompt set across ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews. Establish a baseline in month one.

Checkout completion rate

The most direct conversion signal. With **cart abandonment averaging 70.19% across e-commerce,** even a 3-5 percentage point improvement outperforms the ROI of incremental ranking gains.

PHASE 2

Metric Expansions

Once the first-priority metrics are instrumented and baselined, expand to platform-specific signals:

AEO Metrics

Featured snippet coverage by category-level queries. FAQ visibility on key buying questions. Share of answer placements on priority topics versus competitors. Build a repeatable list of buyer questions by category and track snippet coverage monthly.

GEO and AI Inclusion Metrics

For each query in your prompt library, record whether your brand is mentioned, in what position, and whether product attributes are represented accurately. Track inclusion rate trends monthly. Some AI systems provide citations, you can track citation sources where available.

SXO Metrics

Conversion rate by landing page type (PDP, PLP, buying guide). Checkout funnel drop-off by stage. Repeat purchase rate and cohort retention. Review interaction rate.

SEvO and Cross-Platform Signals

Marketplace impressions and conversion rates for priority categories. Social content that drives product page visits or add-to-carts. Community-driven discovery signals. Assisted conversions from non-search surfaces.

Attribution in a Fragmented World

Attribution is confusing now because the journey doesn't happen in one place. People discover products in places you don't control, compare them inside AI tools, then come back days later and buy.

You don't need a perfect model. You just need enough visibility to answer two things: **what's creating demand and what's closing it.**

Here's a simple way to approach it.

Scenario

Someone sees your product on TikTok, asks ChatGPT to compare it with a competitor, then buys from your site three days later. In GA4, that purchase often looks like "Direct" or "Organic," so TikTok and the AI step disappear.

STEP 01

Make sure GA4 isn't broken

- Check that ecommerce events are firing properly (view_item, add_to_cart, begin_checkout, purchase).
- Confirm revenue, currency, and product IDs are coming through consistently. If this is incorrect, everything else will be misleading.

STEP 02

Tag every link you control

- Add UTMs to: creator links, paid TikTok ads, bio links, story links, YouTube descriptions.
- Use one naming pattern across the team so reporting doesn't splinter.

Example pattern:

- source = tiktok
- medium = paid_social / creator / organic_social
- campaign = spring_sale_2026
- content = creatorname_video1

STEP 03

Find "social-assisted" buyers in GA4

- Go to Explore → Path exploration (or Attribution → Conversion paths).
- Filter to users who purchased.
- Look for paths where TikTok (or other social) appears anywhere before purchase, even if it wasn't last click.

What you're trying to answer:
"How often does TikTok show up before a sale?"

STEP 04

Add a simple time lag view

In GA4, compare

- purchases that happen the same day as the first social visit
- purchases that happen 1-3 days later
- purchases that happen 4-7 days later

This is where a lot of social influence hides.

STEP 05

Track AI influence outside GA4

AI comparisons usually won't show up as a clean referral source, so track it separately.

Once a month:

- Run a fixed set of buying queries (20-50) for your top categories/SKUs.
- For each query, record:
  - Are you mentioned?
  - Are you recommended/shortlisted?
  - Are your key details right (price range, features, availability)?

This tells you whether AI is helping you get considered, even if it doesn't send trackable traffic.

STEP 06

Put it into one weekly view

Keep it simple. Three numbers/trends are enough:

1. Social assist rate (how often social appears before purchase)
2. Direct + organic conversion (what's closing)
3. AI inclusion rate (are you showing up in comparisons, and correctly)

STEP 07

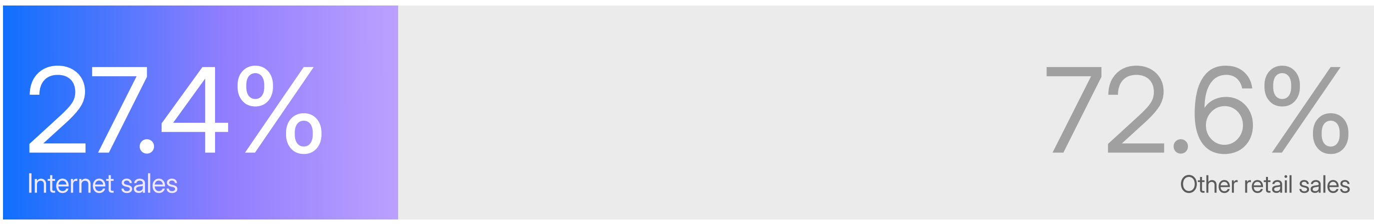
Use GA4 attribution models as a secondary lens

GA4's attribution reports and data-driven attribution can help distribute credit across touchpoints, but treat it as supporting evidence. Your main job is to understand:

- what introduces shoppers to you, and
- what closes the sale

Category-Specific Applications

UK e-commerce behaviour is not uniform across categories. The discovery surface, the trust mechanism, and the conversion barriers shift depending on what people are buying. Internet sales were **27.4% of total UK retail in 2025** according to the Office for National Statistics but category dynamics decide where that number grows and where it stalls.



Internet sales as a share of total UK retail (2025)

Source: Office for National Statistics

Fashion and Apparel

Fashion discovery in the UK is strongly influenced by social feeds, creators, and resale communities. Depop reported **$1B in gross merchandise sales** in 2025, with **90% of buyers under 34.** This is a clear signal of where younger fashion consideration is forming.

$1B
Gross merchandise sales

90%
Buyers under 34

Source: Depop

Priorities

- Invest in creator-led and social discovery surfaces, including resale visibility.
- Ensure clean handling of product variants, sizing, delivery, and returns (fashion is high-return by nature).
- Build structured category guides that answer "how to choose" questions.
- Add fit notes, seasonal context, and dress-code guidance directly within category pages.

A "wedding guest dresses" category that includes a structured guide for dress codes, seasonal fabrics, and fit notes will outperform a pure product grid for AI-mediated discovery and conversion.

Consumer Electronics

Electronics shopping is comparison-heavy and research-led. Video is particularly influential: Ofcom reports that video-on-demand advertising grew **26% year-on-year in 2024,** reflecting continued attention shifts toward online video.

+26%
Video-on-demand ad growth (YoY, 2024)
Source: Ofcom

Priorities

- Add comparison blocks and spec tables to main category pages.
- Structure “best for” sections based on use case (student, gaming, travel, creative, etc.).
- Publish buying guides that clearly explain trade-offs (battery vs weight, panel type vs refresh rate).
- Standardize structured specs and attributes across all product variants.

A laptop category page that includes a decision table by use-case and a glossary of terms increases extractability and reduces purchase uncertainty.

Hobby and Leisure

This category is driven by passion and community. Buyers seek reassurance from peers before purchasing. The UK Hobby and Leisure ecommerce market generated approximately **US$25.9B in 2024** (ECDB estimate).

$25.9B

UK Hobby & Leisure ecommerce market (2024)

Source: Ofcom

Priorities

- Participate in relevant community surfaces and enthusiast content environments.
- Create “starter kit” guides and checklist-style content.
- Bundle compatible products clearly to reduce confusion.
- Make compatibility and return policies easy to understand.

Food, Grocery, and FMCG

Online grocery is concentrated and heavily shaped by availability and substitution. The top four grocery sellers account for more than two-thirds of UK online grocery sales (Mintel), indicating that marketplace-like dynamics matter as much as owned-site SEO for FMCG brands.

Priorities

- Optimize retailer and marketplace listings (product titles, imagery, pack sizes, attributes).
- Provide fast, structured answers to usage questions (ingredients, allergens, nutrition, preparation).
- Maintain consistent product schema and attribute clarity, even if purchases happen elsewhere.
- Keep availability and pack variations clearly structured.

Furniture and Homeware

Homeware purchases are high-consideration and logistics-sensitive. Dunelm reported **digital sales reaching 41% of total sales** in a recent trading update, showing how central online browsing and purchasing has become even for traditionally store-led home categories.

Dunelm digital sales as a share of total sales

Source: Dunelm

Priorities

- Make delivery promises, returns, and assembly details extremely clear.
- Add size guides, room-fit guidance, and material comparison blocks.
- Publish structured buying guides such as “best sofa for small living rooms.”
- Surface dimensions and variant details in machine-readable formats.

Beauty and Personal Care

Beauty discovery is trend-led and creator-driven. TikTok's UK Shopping Report positions beauty as one of the strongest verticals in its shopping ecosystem, indicating how much discovery has shifted toward platform-native environments.

Priorities

- Strengthen creator content and UGC integration.
- Keep product catalogues consistent across social and marketplace surfaces.
- Publish evidence-led ingredient explanations and routine guidance.
- Use shade finders, routine builders, and prominent review summaries to reduce hesitation.

DIY and Home Improvement

DIY demand is shaped by economic cycles and housing behaviour. In 2025, strong investor attention and reported momentum in DIY retailers reflected continuing "stay and improve" behaviour as households chose to improve rather than move. B&Q holds close to **15% share of consumer spending** on DIY (Mintel).

Priorities

- Create project-led guides that answer "how much do I need?" and "how do I do it?" in clear steps.
- Add calculators and materials lists directly into project content.
- Structure availability, stock, delivery constraints, and compatibility clearly.
- Make returns policies for bulky items simple and visible.

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

01 / Chasing every new acronym without strategy

Teams jump into GEO experiments or LLM optimization without stabilizing technical SEO or conversion fundamentals. The result is scattered effort and minimal commercial impact. In a mature, margin-sensitive UK e-commerce market, efficiency matters more than undirected experimentation. Every initiative must be anchored to a revenue objective. Stabilize technical and conversion layers before pursuing AI visibility experiments.

02 / Over-optimizing for one platform

UK consumer behaviour is multi-device and multi-surface: Ofcom reports **smartphone penetration above 90% among UK adults.** Beauty discovery may start on TikTok; electronics comparison may happen in AI assistants; final purchase may occur on Amazon or a retailer's own site. Build platform-neutral assets and diversify discovery presence. Track assisted conversions, not just direct clicks.

03 / Ignoring the fundamentals

Core Web Vitals, structured data, clean canonical architecture, and PDP clarity are often postponed. AI-driven discovery amplifies the importance of performance because fewer visits carry higher intent. Treat technical SEO and site performance as revenue infrastructure, not maintenance tasks.

04 / Treating these as separate initiatives

Running SEO, marketplace optimisation, content, and UX as independent tracks creates friction and delay. Create cross-functional search and discovery squads, align incentives around revenue per organic session and assisted conversion, and share dashboards across content, technical, and commercial teams.

05 / Thin content and keyword stuffing

AI systems penalise superficiality. Replace keyword-heavy copy with structured buying guidance, use comparison tables and clear decision criteria, support claims with data or expert input, and prioritise depth over page volume.

06 / Neglecting user experience

If AI surfaces reduce research friction, the moment of decision becomes more sensitive. Confusing navigation, unclear pricing, or hidden delivery costs increase abandonment. Optimise PDP layout for easy scanning, surface delivery and returns information early, and test checkout friction regularly.

Preparing for What's Next

The current AI shift is the beginning of a deeper transformation in how discovery, evaluation, and purchase decisions are mediated by intelligent systems. Five forces will shape the next phase for UK e-commerce brands.

01 / Agentic AI and Autonomous Search

AI is moving from answering questions to taking actions. Emerging agentic systems do not just summarise information but they can also compare products, track prices, recommend alternatives, and in some cases complete transactions. Adobe's data shows that AI-driven referral traffic to retail sites grew more than twelvefold year-on-year, indicating that conversational AI is already influencing commercial journeys.

Preparation step

When AI agents can autonomously compare and purchase products, brands without machine-readable pricing, real-time stock data, and structured return policies will be invisible to these systems. Start by ensuring your product feeds update within four hours of inventory changes, and that pricing and availability are exposed via structured data, not only rendered in JavaScript.

02 / Multimodal Search (Text, Image, Voice, Video)

Search is no longer purely text-based. UK consumers are highly mobile-first, and Ofcom data shows that video and mobile browsing continue to dominate daily media consumption. Visual search, short-form video discovery, and voice interactions are expanding how people find products.

Preparation step

Audit your product imagery for quality and alt-text completeness; ensure video content has keyword-optimized titles, descriptions, and transcripts; verify that product feeds support image and attribute search. Each of these is an entry point into your catalogue that currently may be closed.

03 / Hyper-Personalization and Context-Aware Results

AI systems increasingly tailor responses based on user behaviour, location, purchase history, and device context. For e-commerce brands, personalization readiness means clean customer data structures, consistent product tagging, clear categorization, and real-time inventory accuracy.

Preparation step

Audit whether your product taxonomy is consistent across your website, marketplace listings, and product feed. Inconsistent categorization is one of the most common reasons AI systems fail to surface a product for contextually relevant queries.

04 / The Continuing Evolution of AI Platforms

Platform dominance is not static. Just as marketplaces rose over the past decade, AI interfaces will continue evolving. Monitor shifts in AI-native shopping integrations, marketplace algorithm changes, social commerce adoption, and platform-specific answer systems. Rigid strategies fail in dynamic environments.

Preparation step

Allocate a small percentage of your content production budget to testing new AI platforms quarterly. Early presence on emerging surfaces is disproportionately valuable before competition intensifies.

05 / Building Adaptive Systems, Not Rigid Strategies

The brands that win in the next phase will not be those who perfectly optimize one surface. They will be those who maintain structured, machine-readable catalogues; continuously test AI visibility; refresh high-intent content; integrate conversion and discovery metrics; and adapt quickly to surface changes. Adaptability is itself a competitive capability which requires deliberate investment in team skills, tooling, and measurement infrastructure.

McKinsey's 2025 AI report indicates that teams building internal AI literacy and deploying AI in optimization workflows are pulling ahead on execution velocity. For e-commerce teams, required competencies include technical SEO and structured data expertise, data analysis and attribution modelling, content strategy focused on comparison and clarity, marketplace optimization skills, UX and conversion testing expertise, and AI tooling fluency.

Your Action Plan

The 80/20 Approach

For most e-commerce brands, 80% of impact will come from two things: high-quality structured buying guidance and clear, fast, trustworthy product experiences. If your category pages answer real buying questions and your PDPs convert efficiently, you capture disproportionate value from every change in the search landscape.

Resource Allocation Framework

Allocate resources by dependency and revenue impact: technical integrity first, then category-level buying guides for high-margin SKUs, then conversion optimization for your top 20% revenue drivers, then AI inclusion monitoring, then platform-native expansion. Avoid spreading resources evenly across surfaces.

Building vs Buying

E-commerce brands usually succeed with a hybrid model: technical SEO and product data management internally, specialised AI visibility audits externally, conversion optimisation internally, and platform-native expansion selectively outsourced. Ownership should remain internal. Execution scale can be external.

30-60-90 Day Implementation Checklist

First 30 Days

- Run a structured data audit on your top 50 revenue-generating SKUs using Google's Rich Results Test; target 100% valid Product schema.
- Identify your top 10 high-margin categories and benchmark their current AI answer inclusion using a 20-query prompt library across ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews.
- Measure current Core Web Vitals (LCP, CLS, INP) on your top-20 category pages; identify pages above the 2.5-second LCP threshold as priority targets.

Next 60 Days

- Publish structured buying guides for your top three margin-driving categories; each guide must include a comparison table, FAQ section, and use-case guidance.
- Improve PDP trust signals on your top 100 SKUs: review schema implementation, transparent delivery timelines, and return policy visibility above the fold.
- Clean up top-priority redirect chains and fix 404 errors on pages with inbound links.

By 90 Days

- Re-run your AI inclusion prompt library and compare to baseline; calculate inclusion rate change for each priority category.
- Launch platform-native optimization for one key surface (e.g., complete Amazon attribute coverage, or a structured TikTok product catalogue).
- Measure conversion uplift from UX changes using revenue per organic session as the primary KPI.

Conclusion

Search in the UK ecommerce market has not disappeared, fragmented, or become unrecognisable. It has matured into a distributed decision system. Consumers now move fluidly between AI summaries, marketplaces, social platforms, community validation, and retailer sites before completing a purchase. Online retail already accounts for more than a quarter of total UK retail sales, and competition for digital attention is intensifying. Visibility is no longer defined by a ranking position alone. It is defined by whether your products are included in AI-generated shortlists, surfaced in answer layers, validated across platforms, and converted efficiently once discovered.

The opportunity within this complexity is significant. As AI systems increasingly shape comparison and consideration, brands that build structured, machine-readable catalogues and authoritative buying content will influence decisions earlier in the journey. As marketplaces and social commerce continue to shape discovery, brands that expand intelligently beyond a single channel will capture demand that others miss.

The AI era of search does not reward those who chase acronyms. It rewards those who integrate technical integrity, structured content, multi-surface visibility, and conversion discipline into one coherent system. In a mature and competitive UK ecommerce landscape, incremental advantages compound quickly. The brands that adapt early will not simply maintain traffic. They will shape perception, secure inclusion, and convert intent more efficiently than their competitors.

The question for UK ecommerce leaders is no longer whether AI will change search. It already has. The real question is whether your organisation is building a visibility system that is structured, extractable, credible, and commercially optimised for how consumers actually discover and decide today.

About Fynd

An AI native unified commerce platform, founded in 2012, Fynd powers 2,300+ brands across 20,000+ stores globally with solutions for online and in-store commerce, logistics, AI innovation, and growth.

Our AI Audit Service gives UK ecommerce brands a structured diagnostic before they invest in fixing anything: AI inclusion analysis, technical schema review, and a prioritized 90-day action plan built for your category and revenue tier.

AI Audit Service

Most UK ecommerce brands don't have a clear picture of how AI systems currently represent them. They don't know whether they're appearing in the right queries, whether their product data is being read correctly, or where competitors are showing up instead.

Our AI audit is a structured diagnostic for brands who want to understand where they stand before investing in fixing it. We look at how your brand and products appear across AI-generated answers, where your structured data is letting you down, and what's most likely to move the needle in your category.

You come away with a clear view of the gaps and a prioritized set of actions, not a generic report.

AI Inclusion Audit

We test 50+ queries across ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews to map where your brand appears, where it doesn't, and where it's being misrepresented.

Technical and Schema Review

A full structured data audit across your top revenue-generating SKUs, identifying gaps that prevent AI systems from reading and representing your products accurately.

Prioritized Action Plan

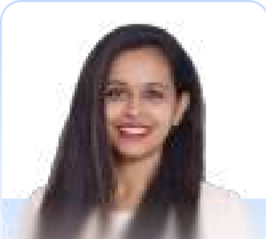
A 90-day roadmap specific to your category, revenue tier, and team resource, so you know exactly what to fix first and why.

Meet the UK Team

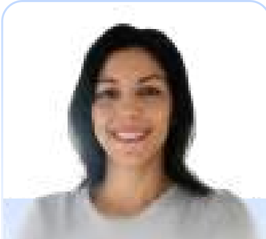
Sreeraman MG
Founder

Ronak Modi
CBO - Global

Vipul Aggarwal
Sales Director - UK



Aditi Thakore
PR & Comms - UK



Giada D'Ortona
Sales Lead - UK

Shubham Soni
Sr. AE - UK

Get in Touch

Fynd | London Office

WeWork, 2 Eastbourne Terrace London, England W2 6LG

Shopsense Retail Technologies Ltd.
Company Number - 17034410

uk@fynd.com

fynd.com

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