



A GUIDE FOR TRADES AND CONSTRUCTION BUSINESSES

Getting found on AI

Where your next job comes from when the customer asks ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini instead of Google.

Written by Steve Mark · September 2026 · wearesmc.co.uk

What's in here

PART ONE

What's changing, and what it costs you

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2. Two searches, two different games
3. The uncomfortable UK evidence
4. Why this is good news for you
5. How the machine picks who to name

PART TWO

The nine jobs

1. Know what they ask before they ring
2. Write the five answers only you could write
3. Get reviews that say something
4. Be on the lists, spelled right
5. Make your local name leave a footprint
6. Put your accreditations into words
7. Get talked about
8. Make sure the machine can read your site
9. Point a phone at your work

PART THREE

Doing it

1. The 90-day plan
2. How to tell if it's working
3. Nine things that don't work
4. If you build for other builders
5. The three-job version

Then: sources, about the author, and what to do next.

Read Part one once. Fifteen minutes. Then work down Part two in order. The order is the money order.

START HERE

The 60-second version

- 1 Nearly half of people now ask an AI assistant for a local business recommendation. A year ago it was one in sixteen.
- 2 When someone types “plumber in Hull”, they still get a map. That game hasn't changed.
- 3 When someone asks a question like “how much should a new boiler cost?”, they get an AI answer almost every time. That game is new, and most trades businesses aren't in it.
- 4 When someone asks an AI assistant to recommend a tradesperson in the UK, it reads a directory out loud. Nine in ten times, your own website has nothing to do with it.
- 5 **Everything in this guide is one of two jobs: get on the lists, or become the answer.**

START HERE

The one honest promise

There is no switch. Nobody can put you in ChatGPT by Friday, and anyone who says they can is selling you something they cannot deliver.



9

jobs, in order of what they cost and what they return

3

of them are nearly free and take a day

12–18

months for the rest to compound. That's the honest timeline.



Twenty years marketing trades businesses and the most expensive habit I see is tactic-hopping. A founder gets bombarded from social, from the trade press, from the bloke at the plumbers' yard who "does this and does that", and scatters across all of it. The killer detail isn't the wasted money. It's that they never give one thing long enough to work, so they never learn what works. AI is about to become the next great excuse for that. Don't let it be.

STEVE MARK, FOUNDER, WE ARE SMC



WHAT'S CHANGING

01

Part one: what's changing, and what it costs you

Five chapters, fifteen minutes. What the numbers actually say, what they don't, and where the money sits.

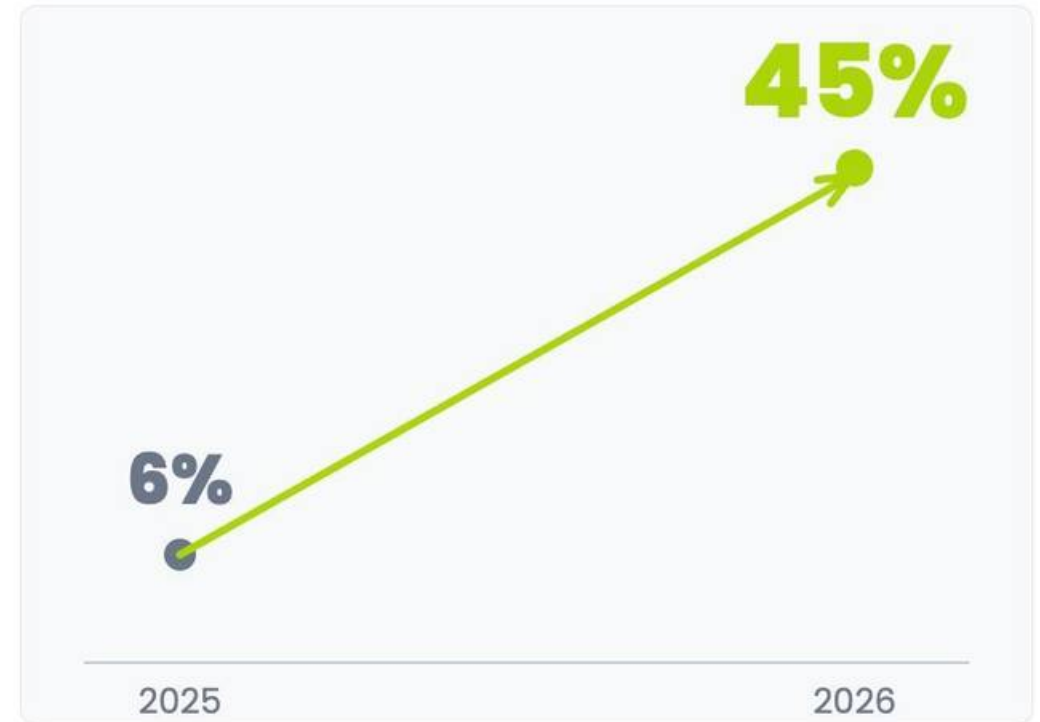
CHAPTER 1

Your customer is not only asking Google but ChatGPT

6% → 45%

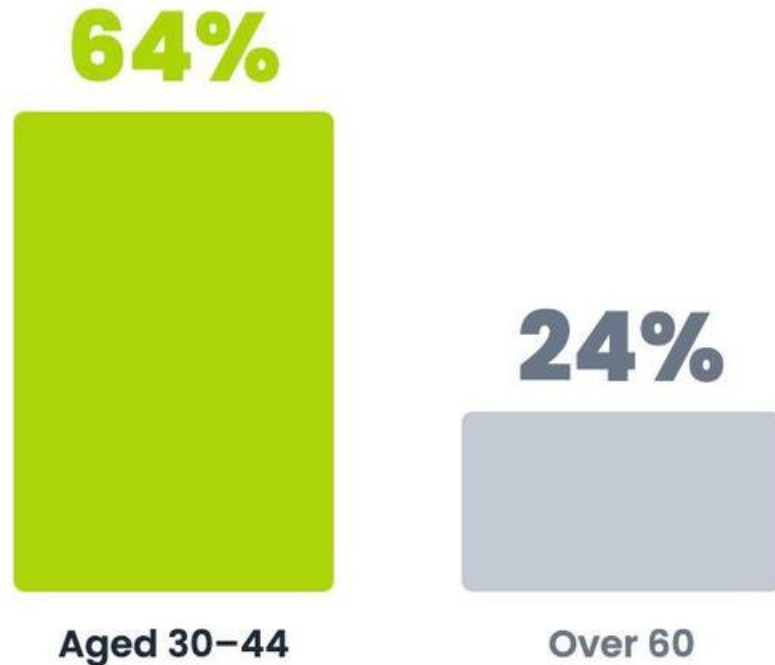
Share of consumers who used an AI tool to get a local business recommendation, 2025 to 2026. A sevenfold jump in twelve months.

Over the same year, Google's share of local business discovery fell from **83% to 71%**.



CHAPTER 1

Look at who's changing their search habits



Have asked an AI assistant for a business recommendation. The 30-44 bracket is the person with a mortgage and a house that needs work.

BrightLocal AI-trust supplemental report, March 2026. US adults.

THE UK SIGNAL

Checkatrade launched inside ChatGPT in April 2026

A homeowner describes the job, gets a list of vetted tradespeople, and for simple work gets a fixed price and books it, without leaving the chat window.

50,000+

vetted trade businesses, 28 years of brand. Forget the product. Read the decision.

IN MONEY

Why you should care, in money terms

**You don't need to believe every figure.
You need to answer one question.**

If one in three of my enquiries started in a chat window in two years' time, would my business appear?

That's the size of the prize. It's also the size of the risk if your competitor gets there first.

DO THIS SUM WITH YOUR OWN NUMBERS

My average job is worth £ _____

I win about _____ in every 10 quotes

So one extra enquiry a week is worth £ _____
a year

≈ **£43,000**

a year, for a firm doing £2,500 jobs and winning 1 in 3.
Illustration using example figures, not a promise.

CHAPTER 2

Two searches, two different games

THE "WHO DO I CALL" SEARCH

plumbers in Hull



93%

map pack appears

15%

AI answer appears

THE "WHAT SHOULD THIS COST" SEARCH

how much should a new boiler cost in Hull



97%

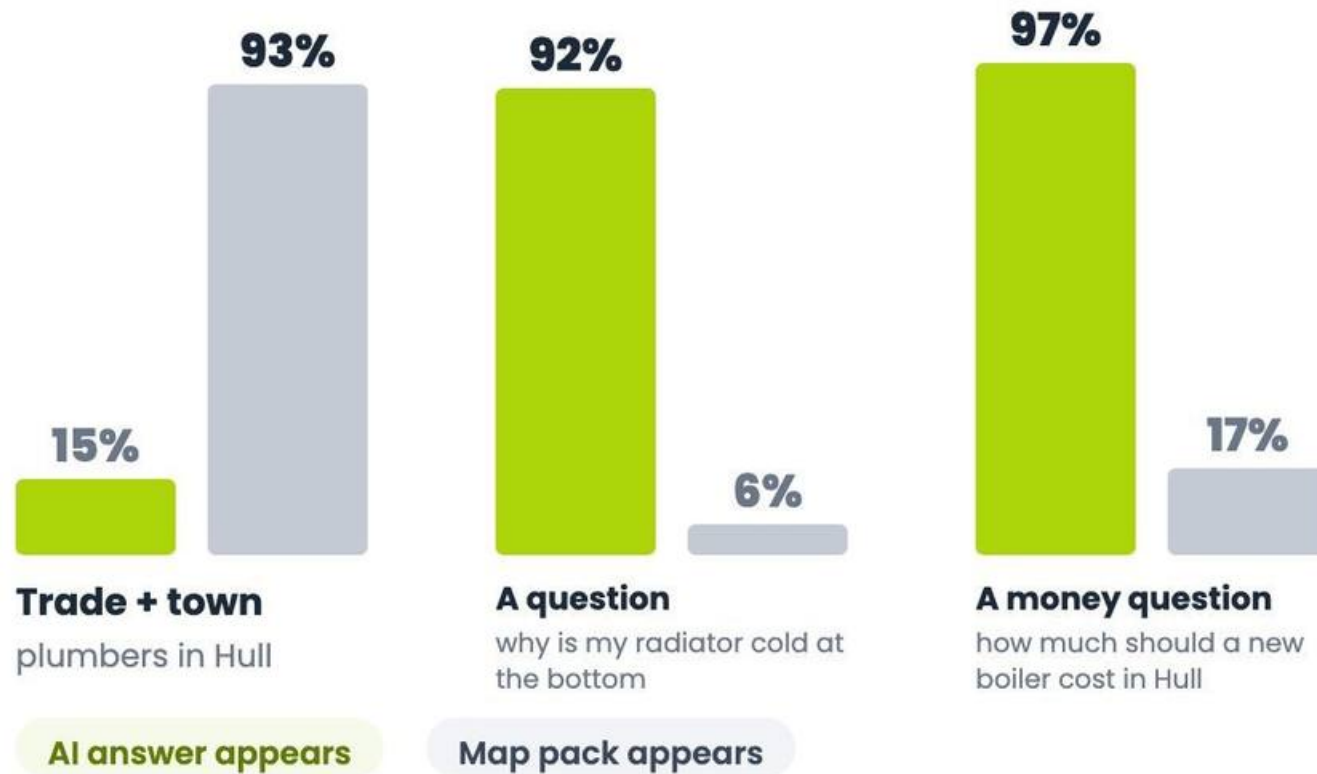
AI answer appears

17%

map pack appears

CHAPTER 2

What the customer types decides which game they're in



WATCH OUT

This is US data from May 2025, and the numbers will have moved

Don't take our word for it, or anyone else's. Chapter 16 shows you how to test your own trade in your own town in twenty minutes.

Do that before you spend a penny with anybody, us included.

CHAPTER 2

What those three rows mean

ROW ONE

The map pack has not been replaced

Trade + town still returns a map with three businesses, more than nine times out of ten. Your Google profile, your reviews and how close you are still win that search. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

ROW TWO

A question gets an AI answer

Almost every time. Nine in ten searches that are phrased as a question are answered by Google itself, in a block of text above the results.

ROW THREE

A question with money attached

Google answers it itself, 97% of the time. No map. An answer built from whoever wrote the best page on the subject.

If that page isn't yours, it's a national comparison site's. And that site has no interest in your phone ringing.

PLAIN ENGLISH

AI Overview is the block of AI-written text at the top of Google, above the normal results. **Map pack** is the map with three businesses on it. Different things, different searches, won by different work.

IN MONEY

The two games, and what each one is worth to you

	The “who do I call” search	The “what should this cost” search
Where the customer is	Ready to ring somebody	Two to six weeks out
What wins it	Your Google profile, your reviews, being on the lists	Having written the best answer
What it feels like	Phone rings today	Phone rings next month, and they already trust you
Lead quality	Mixed. Price shoppers included.	Higher. They've read you. They arrive warm.
Which jobs	3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 8, 9

Most trades businesses are half-decent at the left column and absent from the right one. The right column is where the better-margin work sits. Someone who has read your honest page about what a boiler swap actually costs is not ringing round for three quotes.

CHAPTER 3

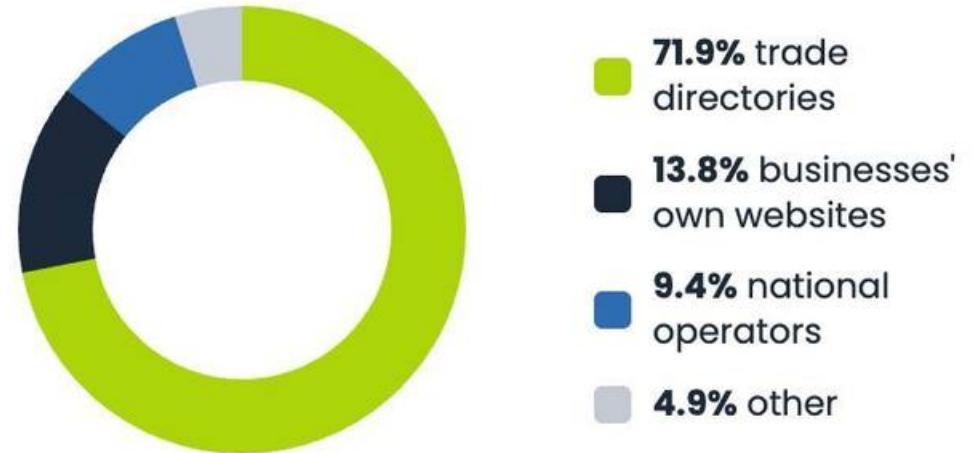
The uncomfortable UK evidence

A UK agency asked ChatGPT to recommend a tradesperson 80 times. Eight trades, ten UK towns, one consistent wording. They logged all 405 sources it cited.

Every single one of the 80 answers cited a trade directory.

71.9%

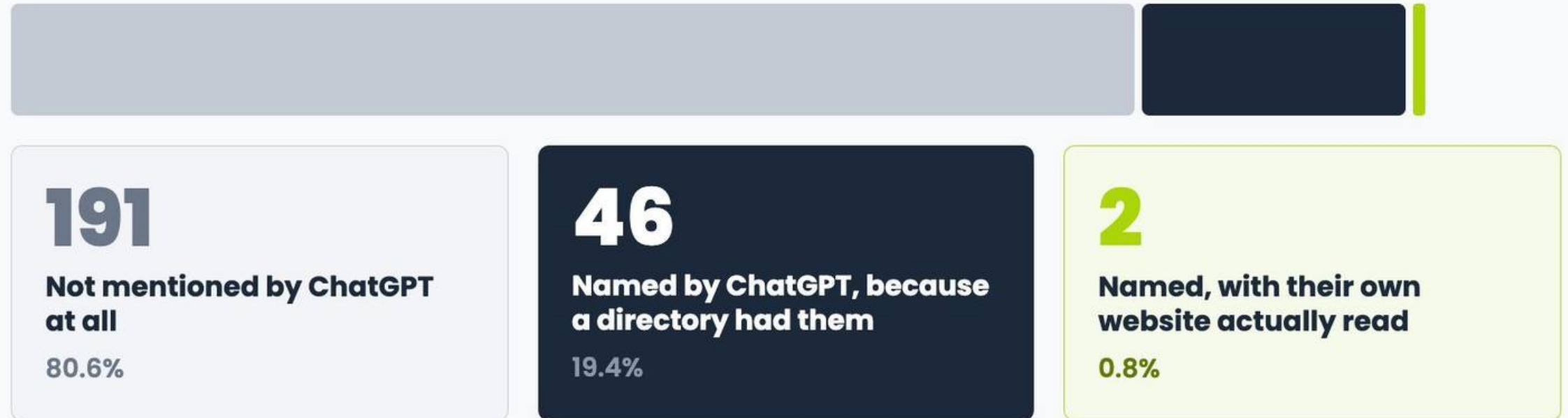
of the sources ChatGPT cited were trade directories. A business's own website accounted for 13.8%.



CHAPTER 3

The 237 businesses Google ranks in the map pack

They ran the same searches through Google, captured the map pack, and laid the two side by side. Four in five of the businesses Google thinks are the best answer in town didn't appear in the AI answer at all.



Murray Digital, 25 August 2026. Of the 41 named businesses with a website listed on their Google profile, two had that website read.

CHAPTER 3

What actually happens when someone asks



The customer asks

"Can you recommend a good plumber near me?"



AI tools like ChatGPT or Claude looks for a list

Not for local tradespeople. For a page that has already ranked and vetted them.



It reads the list out

Names, ratings and review counts, lifted straight from the directory listing.

STEVE SAYS

Asked to recommend a local tradesperson, the machine doesn't go looking for local tradespeople. It goes looking for lists of them, and reads the list out.

CHAPTER 3

It's worse in smaller towns

52.1%

of answers across the six cities cited at least one business's own website

31.3%

across Paisley, Barrhead, Johnstone and Renfrew

In a smaller town there's less of everything else, so the list *is* the answer.

WATCH OUT

Treat this as a direction, not a measurement

Eighty prompts on one day, one wording, through the developer version rather than the app, and ChatGPT only. The author says all of that himself, which is exactly why we trust it. What it proves is a pattern, not a percentage.

IN MONEY

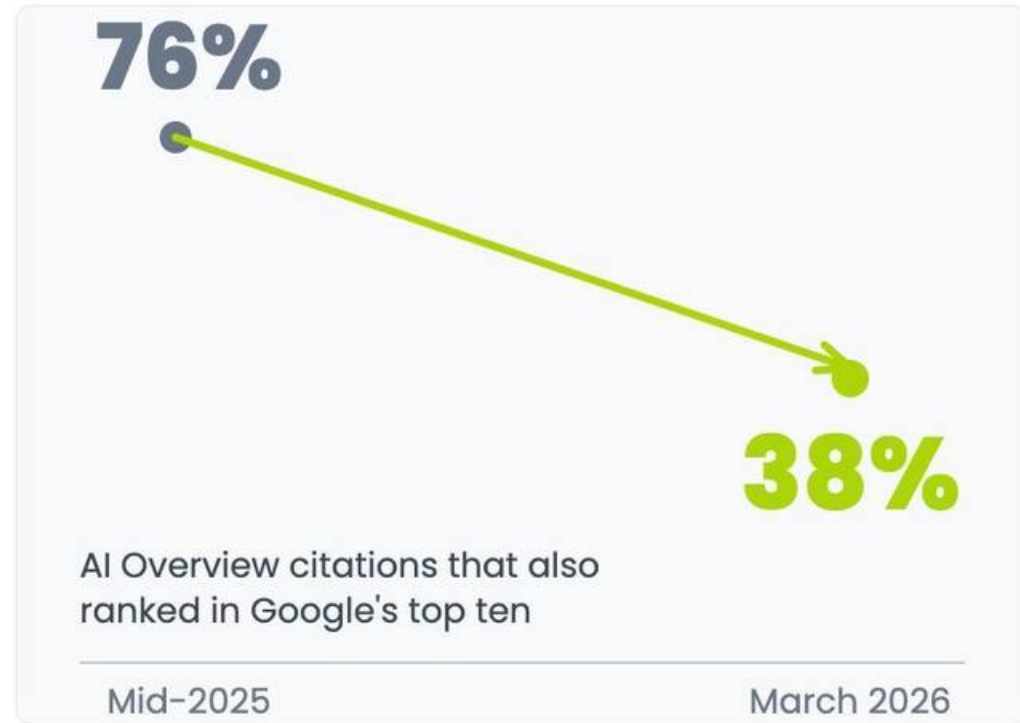
What this changes about where your money goes

If you were about to spend £4,000 on a new website in the hope of being found by AI, stop and read this.

What you were going to do	What the evidence says
Rebuild the website to “be AI ready”	Your site was read in 2 out of 41 cases. Fix whether it can be read at all (Job 8, half a day) and spend the rest elsewhere.
Ignore directory listings because the leads are poor	The listing is what the machine reads. Even a free, accurate listing is doing a job you weren't counting.
Chase more Google reviews only	Nearly every business named came with a rating and review count attached, lifted from a directory. Reviews need to exist in more than one place.
Buy “AI optimisation” at £900 a month	Ask which of the nine jobs in Part two they're doing. If they can't answer, that's your answer.

CHAPTER 4

Why this is actually good news for you



You no longer have to beat the big sites to be quoted. You have to answer one specific question better than they do.

Away from Google it's more extreme again. Only around **12%** of the pages cited by ChatGPT, Perplexity and Copilot were in Google's top ten. Roughly **80%** weren't in the top hundred for the original search at all.

Nobody at a national comparison site can write about the awkward flue positions in 1930s semis in your town. You can. Today. For free.

IN MONEY

The maths of a small site beating a big one

YOU WILL NEVER WIN

"boiler replacement cost UK"

400 firms and three national sites are in that fight.

YOU CAN WIN

"how much does a combi boiler swap cost in Hull"

Maybe six firms are in that fight, and four of them have published nothing.

FILL IN YOUR OWN NUMBERS

Six pages like that, done properly, is about **six days** of someone's time.

If two of them get quoted and each brings one enquiry a month:

24 enquiries a year, at your close rate of _____ in 10 and an average job of £ _____

= £ _____

For most heating firms that comes out well north of the cost of writing the pages. Illustration, not a promise.

PROOF

Six pages beat sixty

306%

RISE IN ORGANIC CLICKS,
FIRST THREE MONTHS

Page 1

AIR CONDITIONING SERVICE
PAGES, WITHIN THREE
MONTHS OF LAUNCH

A renewables and air conditioning client came to us with a new site and a short runway. Instead of publishing broadly, we went narrow on the questions their actual customers were asking.

**Depth on the questions that matter
beats breadth on the ones that don't.**

Early results on a young site, and we're not done. The lesson holds.



CHAPTER 5

It asks itself more questions than the customer did

It looks things up; it doesn't remember. Google's AI fires off a set of related searches at the same time and pulls from all of them. Whoever has decent pages on the side questions gets pulled into the answer, even though nobody searched for them.



Google Search Central, guidance on generative AI features, May 2026. Google's own example is "how to fix a lawn full of weeds".

CHAPTER 5

Every AI answer puts your page through three gates

1 

Indexed

Is your page in the index this assistant searches? Shut for most trades sites.

Fixed in Job 8

2 

Readable

When the crawler fetched your page, could it see any words? Shut for most trades sites.

Fixed in Job 8

3 

Citable

Is it the clearest, most trustworthy answer? This is the one everybody spends money on.

Fixed in Jobs 1, 2, 7

Almost all the money wasted on this gets spent on gate three while gate one is still shut.

CHAPTER 5

There isn't one index

Each assistant searches a different place. Don't try to please six systems. Get Google right, then make sure Bing has you indexed.

Assistant	Where it gets its facts	What that means for you
Google AI Overviews	Google's index, plus your Business Profile	Your existing Google work carries over
Gemini	Google's index and Knowledge Graph	The only major AI crawler that runs JavaScript
ChatGPT	Bing's index, OpenAI's crawl, listing sites	Bing is the floor; directories do the lifting
Copilot	Bing's index	If Bing hasn't got you, Copilot can't name you
Perplexity	Its own index plus others	Rewards clean pages and public PDFs
Claude	Web search when switched on	Rewards specific numbers and named sources

QUICK WIN

Verify your site in Bing Webmaster Tools. Fifteen minutes, free, one click to import your settings from Google, and it's the gateway to both ChatGPT and Copilot. Plenty of sites that rank fine on Google are barely indexed on Bing because nobody ever looked.

CHAPTER 5

Unique content is the biggest lever Google names

GENERIC: GOOGLE'S EXAMPLE

7 Tips for First-Time Homebuyers

Anyone could have written this. So could a machine.

UNIQUE: GOOGLE'S EXAMPLE

Why We Waived the Inspection & Saved Money: A Look Inside the Sewer Line

Only someone who was actually down there with a camera could have written this.

You see things every week that a national website will never see. That's the raw material, and it's the one thing AI can't fake, because it didn't do the job.

CHAPTER 5

What you can ignore: Google's own mythbusting

Google's position is that its AI features run on its normal search ranking and quality systems. AEO, GEO: the same work with new labels. Now you can check a sales pitch against the source.

What you'll be sold	What Google says
An "llms.txt" file	Not needed. Google doesn't use them. Clarified again in June 2026.
"Chunking" your content for AI	No requirement. Google handles multi-topic pages fine.
Rewriting your site "for AI"	Not needed. The systems understand meaning and synonyms.
Buying brand mentions	Seeking inauthentic mentions "isn't as helpful as it might seem". Spam systems apply to AI features too.
Special schema markup for AI	Not required. Keep normal schema for normal search results.

STEVE SAYS

Half the AI optimisation industry is selling you the vehicle. What's actually being rewarded is what's always been rewarded: knowing something worth saying, and saying it clearly.

THE WORK

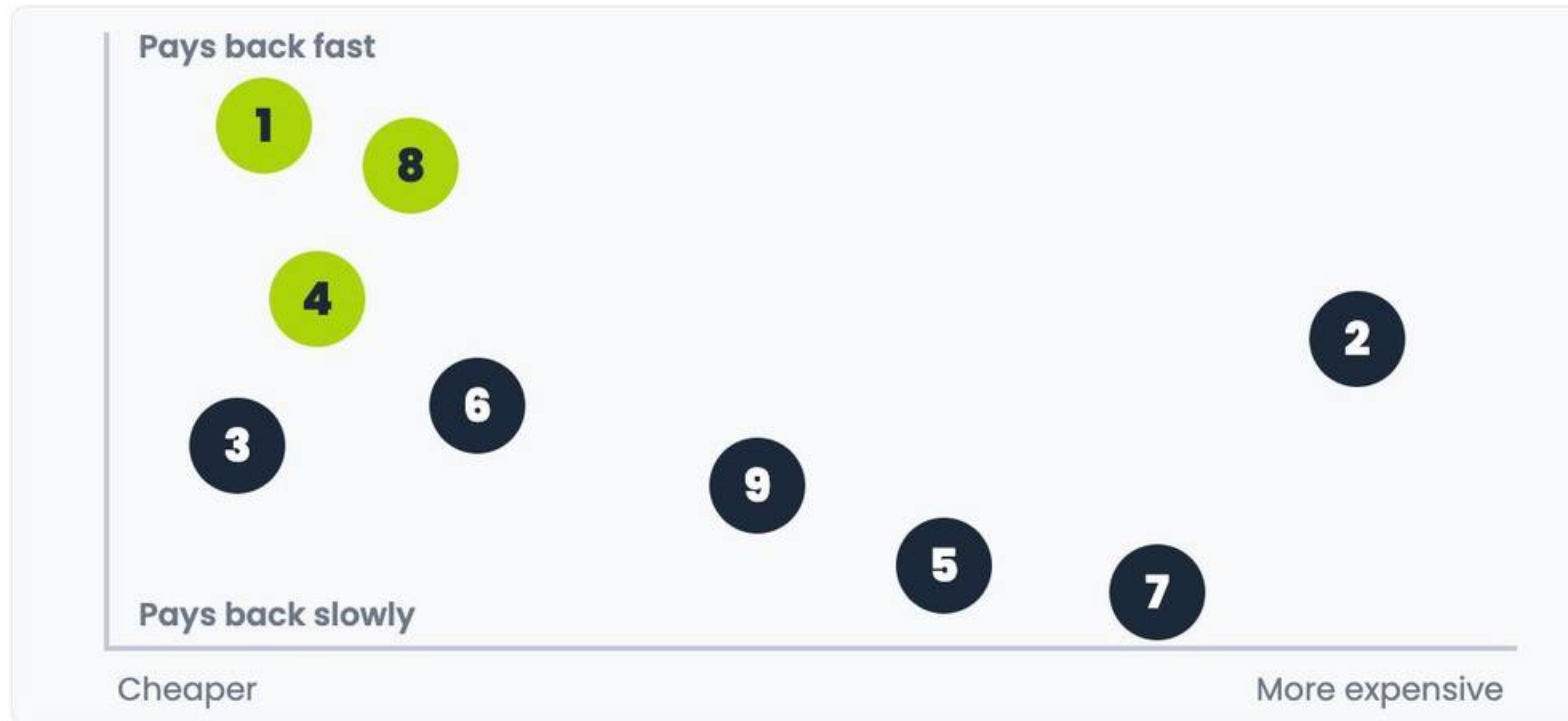
02

Part two: the nine jobs

There is no single switch. There are nine jobs. They compound, and the order matters, because your money and your time are finite.

PART TWO

The nine jobs, by what they cost and when they pay



CHEAP AND FAST

Jobs 1, 4, 8

Nearly free, about a day between them. Nothing else works properly until these are done.

MEDIUM, COMPOUNDS

Jobs 2, 3, 6, 9

SLOW, EARNS EVERYTHING ELSE

Jobs 5, 7

Don't skip to Job 9 because video sounds fun. The order is the money order.

SCORECARD

Score yourself out of nine. One tick each, honestly.

- ☐ I have a written list of the questions customers ask before they book
- ☐ I've published proper answers to at least five of them
- ☐ I ask every customer for a review, on more than one platform
- ☐ My name, address and phone number are identical everywhere online
- ☐ Something I sponsor or won has a page about it on someone else's website
- ☐ My accreditations are written in words on my site, with numbers
- ☐ My business name appears on sites I don't own, at least monthly
- ☐ I know for certain an AI crawler can read my website
- ☐ There are videos online that say my business name out loud

0–2 ticks

Normal. Start with Jobs 1, 4 and 8.
Half a day of work, most of it free.

3–5 ticks

Ahead of most. Jobs 2 and 3 are
where your money should go next.

6+ ticks

Top few per cent of trades
businesses in the country. Jobs 7
and 9 are what's left.

PART TWO

The nine jobs at a glance

#	The job	What it costs	When it shows	Which game
1	Know what they ask before they ring	Free, 2 weeks	Immediately	Both
2	Write the five answers only you could write	5–6 days of time	3–9 months	The question search
3	Get reviews that say something	Free, plus a habit	1–3 months	Who do I call
4	Be on the lists, spelled right	Free to low	1–3 months	Who do I call
5	Make your local name leave a footprint	Money you may already spend	3–12 months	Both
6	Put your accreditations into words	Already paid for	1–2 months	Both
7	Get talked about	A consequence of 2, 5, 9	6–18 months	Both
8	Make sure the machine can read your site	Half a day, once	Immediate once fixed	Both
9	Point a phone at your work	An hour a week	3–12 months	Both

1

JOB ONE

Know what they ask before they ring

Write down the questions your customers ask in the weeks before they contact anybody, in their words, and rank them by how close each one sits to a job.



95%

of the customer's journey happens before they're ready to ring anyone. Most trades websites are written only for the last 5%.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Nothing, and that's the point. Customers have always researched before they bought. What's changed is that Google now answers that research itself, 92 to 97% of the time, using whoever wrote the best page.

So the questions your customers ask are no longer background noise. They're the list of places you can be found.

Free, two weeks of noting things down, and everything else in Part two depends on it.

JOB ONE

Questions have a price. Rank them by distance to a job.

How long should a boiler last?

£

Is it worth replacing before it fails?

££

What size boiler do I need?

£££

How much is a combi swap
in Hull?

££

££

Best boiler installer
in Hull

£££

££

WHY THIS PAYS

It stops you writing pages nobody asked for. Most trades businesses that “do content” write about themselves. That's the expensive mistake this job prevents.

Rank your questions by distance to a job and you know exactly which five pages to write first.

A customer who has read your page about what a boiler swap really costs isn't ringing round for three quotes. That's a close-rate change, not a traffic change.

JOB ONE: DO THIS

Five steps, three hours of actual work

Cost: £0

Time: 2 weeks passive, 3 hours active

Improves every other job at once

1 Mine your own phone

For two weeks, write down every question a customer asks before booking, in their words, not yours. Best research there is, nobody else has it, and it's free.

2 Split the list into three

Research questions, money questions, ready-to-hire questions. The first two need pages. The third one doesn't. That's Jobs 3 to 6.

3 Widen it for free

Put your top ten into AlsoAsked and look at Google's "People also ask" boxes. Then ask ChatGPT what UK homeowners ask before replacing a boiler. Use it as a mirror, not a writer.

4 Rank by distance to a job

Cost questions, "is it worth it" questions, "do I need permission" questions and "what goes wrong" questions sit closest to the money. Start there.

5 Check who Google currently answers with

For your top ten, note whether an AI answer appears and which sites it quotes. National comparison sites and forums mean the door is open. A competitor down the road means someone's already doing this.



The distress test

Split your questions by whether the customer is panicking or planning. It changes where your money should go.

Panicking

An emergency plumbing customer makes a fast, gut-feel decision. The map pack, your reviews and answering the phone are nearly everything. Content barely features.

Weight your money towards Jobs 3, 4 and 8.

Planning

A heat pump, solar or loft conversion customer runs a long research trail through reviews, case studies, accreditations and help content.

Job 2 is where your money should go.

Most firms are a mix, and most get the balance wrong by instinct.

2

JOB TWO

Write the five answers only you could write

Answer your customers' real questions properly, on your own site, one question per page, written by someone who actually does the work.

44.2%

of the text AI assistants quote is taken from the first 30% of a page. Bury your answer and you lose.

Wix extraction-position analysis, 2026

WHAT'S CHANGED

Length stopped winning

Ahrefs studied 75,000 brands and found almost no relationship between how many pages a site has and how often AI names it: a correlation of about **0.19**, which is nothing.

Structure started winning

Scannable structure (headings, bullet points, images) scored **10th out of all 187 factors** for AI visibility. Not tenth among the new ones. Tenth overall.

JOB TWO

What a quotable page looks like

- 1 **How much does a new boiler cost in Hull?**
- 2 **Between £1,800 and £3,400**, depending on four things. Then the four things, listed.
- 3 A real number on the page. Not “affordable” but a range. Not “quickly” but a timescale.
- 4 By Dave Hutchins, Gas Safe registered, registration 123456: a named author with a real credential.
- 5 Last updated 4 September 2026, and only changed when the page actually changed.
- 6 A short FAQ block at the foot. FAQs on service pages scored 43rd of 187 for AI visibility.
- 7 Links to the service page and two sibling questions. Internal linking is the 6th most important local organic factor.

76%

of ChatGPT's most-quoted pages had been updated in the previous 30 days. Freshness matters more than it used to.

Massive pages of content are no longer the way. Give people the recipe right at the start.

Darren Shaw, Local Search Ranking Factors 2026

JOB TWO: DO THIS

Eight habits that make a page quotable

Cost: 5–6 days of time

One page a fortnight, ongoing

Shows in 3–9 months

- 1 One question, one page**
Title it as the question, not “Boiler Replacement Services”. Merge pages that answer the same thing.
- 2 Answer in the first 50 words**
Before the story, the caveats and the sales pitch. The single biggest change most trades sites need.
- 3 Put a real number on every page**
Not “affordable” but a range. Specific figures with context are what gets quoted.
- 4 Write the bit only you could write**
The awkward flue positions in 1930s semis in your town. Free, and nobody can copy it.
- 5 Make it liftable**
Headings as questions, short paragraphs, a table where you compare, a numbered list for steps.
- 6 Name the author and date it**
A real person with a real trade credential, and a visible “last updated” date.
- 7 Link it together**
Every page links to its service page and two sibling questions. Ten minutes a page.
- 8 Diarise a quarterly review**
Top ten pages, four times a year. Prices, regulations, anything that’s changed.

JOB TWO

One warning, and one client

WATCH OUT

Get the nation right, every time

Rules differ across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Part P applies in England and Wales, not Scotland. Landlord electrical rules differ. Grant schemes differ.

Publishing an England-only rule as a UK-wide fact is the fastest way to be wrong in public, and when a machine is quoting you, being confidently wrong travels a lot further than it used to.

Name the nation the rule applies to.

PROOF

£223k → £1.3m

VIDETTA HEATING, SIX YEARS, ROUGHLY 486% GROWTH

They came to us doing around £223k a year, with digital marketing barely started and a short runway. Six years on they dominate their local area digitally.



There was no single moment. Content, reviews and consistency compounding, with the discipline not to jump to the next shiny thing every quarter.

3

JOB THREE

Get reviews that say something

Reviews on more than one platform, asked for steadily, with enough detail in them to be worth quoting.



82%

of consumers now read the AI-written summary of your reviews.

23% would decide on that

summary alone

Source: 2024 US adults

WHAT'S CHANGED

Reviews used to be a star rating people glanced at. Now they're raw material a machine turns into a paragraph about you. That means the **words** in your reviews matter, not just the average.

In the UK trades study, nearly every business ChatGPT named came with a rating and review count attached, lifted straight from a directory listing.

Your reviews are being read out loud to a customer who never visits any of your pages.

Review signals now account for around 20% of map pack ranking, up from 16% in 2023, second only to your Google profile itself.

JOB THREE

Same star rating. Completely different summary.

VAGUE REVIEWS

"Good job, thanks."

"Very happy. 5 stars."

"Great service, would recommend."

THE SUMMARY A MACHINE WRITES

"Customers describe the service as good and would recommend the business."

SPECIFIC REVIEWS

"Turned up when he said, explained the options, cleared up."

"Fitted the combi in a day and took the old tank away."

"Quoted £2,400, charged £2,400. No surprises."

THE SUMMARY A MACHINE WRITES

"Customers repeatedly mention punctuality, clear explanation of options, tidy work and quotes that hold."

QUICK WIN: THREE MINUTES

Copy your last twenty Google reviews into ChatGPT and ask it to summarise them the way it would for a customer choosing between three firms. If the summary comes out vague, your problem isn't your star rating. It's that nobody's reviews say anything specific.

JOB THREE: DO THIS

The cheapest thing on the list, and it moves both games

Cost: £0

10 minutes a week, forever

Shows in 1–3 months

1 **Ask every customer, every time, no conditions**

A text with a direct link, the day the job finishes. The main reason a trades business has few reviews is that nobody asks.

2 **Go steady, not in bursts**

Sustained flow ranks 14th of 187; recency ranks 11th. Two a month forever beats twenty in one week then silence.

3 **Spread beyond Google**

Checkatrade, MyBuilder, TrustATrader, Which? Trusted Traders, Trustpilot, Facebook. Pick one second platform to start.

4 **Ask a better question**

Never script a customer. But “would you mind mentioning what we did and how it went?” gets far more usable text.

5 **Reply to every one, fast and like a human**

Slow or generic replies read as a red flag. A reply that restates the job is also more text machines read.

6 **Ask for photos**

Reviews with photos jumped to 43rd of 187 this year, having not existed as a factor before. Rare enough to stand out.

7 **Put a reviews page on your own site**

In the main menu. A page you control, collecting your proof in one crawlable place. Almost nobody does it.

IN MONEY

Replying to reviews is worth half your enquiries

88%



Replies to all its
reviews

47%



Replies to none

Share of consumers who would use the business. That's not a ranking factor. That's nearly half your enquiries deciding whether to call you, based on whether you can be bothered to type "thanks Dave, glad the new pump sorted it".

97% of consumers read reviews before choosing a local business, and **41%** now say they always do, up from 29% a year earlier.

The customer who rings you without checking your reviews first barely exists any more.

WATCH OUT

Never pay for reviews, and never fake them. Rewarding positive reviews specifically can attract regulators, and a review profile that doesn't match the real experience creates the mismatch that generates one-star reviews later.

4

JOB FOUR

Be on the lists, spelled right

Your business on the directories and listings that matter, with exactly the same name, address and phone number everywhere.

78 of 80

answers cited Checkatrade when ChatGPT was asked to recommend a UK tradesperson. MyBuilder appeared in 70.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Directory listings spent a decade going out of fashion in local search. They came back in 2026, and AI is the reason.

Three of the top five AI visibility factors are citation factors. In AI search, mentions are the new link.

PLAIN ENGLISH

A **citation** just means a mention of your business name, address and phone number on somebody else's website. A directory listing is one. So is your trade association's member page, your local council's business list, and the page on the football club's site thanking you for the shirts.

JOB FOUR

The lists ChatGPT actually read

Checkatrade

78 of 80 answers

MyBuilder

70 of 80 answers

THEN, IN ORDER OF HOW OFTEN THEY APPEARED

Three Best Rated

Yell

TrustATrader

MyJobQuote

Which? Trusted Traders

WHY THIS PAYS

When a customer asks an assistant for a recommendation, it reads a list. If you're not on the list, you're not in the answer. It's that blunt.

The consistency half matters even more than the presence half. If three sources give three different phone numbers, the machine has to pick one, and it may pick the old one, or name a competitor it's more certain about.

Before renewing a £200-a-month subscription, separate the leads it sends you from the citation it gives you. The citation is often free elsewhere.

Murray Digital, 80 prompts, 25 August 2026. Only Checkatrade and MyBuilder were reported with exact counts; the rest are given in rank order.

JOB FOUR: DO THIS

Cheap, boring, and the best return on the list right now

Cost: £0 to start

One focused day, then 30 mins a month

Shows in 1–3 months

1 **Audit what's already out there**

Search your name, your number, and your old number. Log every listing, duplicates and previous trading names included.

2 **Fix the free foundations first**

Google Business Profile, Bing Places, Apple Maps, Facebook. Consistency across the three map platforms ranks 28th of 187.

3 **Fill in every single field**

Services, categories, hours, description, photos, payment methods, service areas. Empty fields are free ranking left on the table.

4 **Write one sentence and use it everywhere**

"Videtta Heating is a Gas Safe registered heating and plumbing company serving Essex." That sentence is what a machine lifts.

5 **Ask the assistants which lists matter**

Ask ChatGPT and Gemini which directories they consider important for your trade and region. They've just told you what they read.

6 **Chase relevance, not volume**

Chamber of commerce, trade association, town business list, the manufacturers you're accredited to. Thirty relevant beat three hundred irrelevant.

7 **Petition the best-of lists**

Expert-curated best-of lists rank 48th for local organic. You can't buy your way on. You ask, you provide evidence, some say no.

QUICK WIN: FIVE MINUTES

Open these five things side by side

GOOGLE PROFILE

Videtta Heating

01277 123456

WEBSITE FOOTER

Videtta Heating Ltd

01277 123 456

FACEBOOK

**Videtta Heating &
Plumbing**

07800 123456

DIRECTORY

Videtta Htg Ltd

01277 123456

INVOICE

**Videtta Heating
Limited**

0800 123 4567

Is the business name identical, character for character? Is the phone number the same? The address? **For most firms the answer is no.**

ONE VERSION, USED EVERYWHERE

Videtta Heating Ltd • 01277 123 456 • 14 Example Way, Brentwood CM14 1AA

WATCH OUT

Don't buy the "200 listings for £99" package. You get your details on 200 sites nobody reads, often with small errors, and those errors are now loose in the system and hard to pull back. Twenty right beats two hundred nearly-right.

5

JOB FIVE

Make your local name leave a footprint

When you sponsor something, win something or get covered by something, make sure it produces a page on somebody else's website with your name on it.

£500

The sponsorship you already pay for. Whether it produces a digital signal or nothing at all comes down to one email asking for a page.

WHAT'S CHANGED

This is where sponsoring the under-11s and entering the local business awards stops being a nice gesture and becomes a search asset, but only if it leaves something a machine can read.

**A set of shirts with your name on them is invisible online.
What counts is a page.**

Quality of unstructured citations (newspaper articles, blog posts, gov sites, industry associations) rank 37th of 187 for local organic visibility.

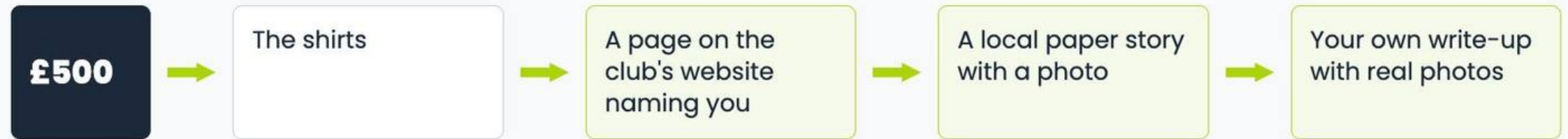
JOB FIVE

Two paths from the same £500

PATH A: WHAT MOST FIRMS DO



PATH B: SAME MONEY, FOUR EMAILS



3 **crawlable mentions of your business name, next to words like “best”, your trade and your town. Same money. Different return, and it feeds Job 7.**

JOB FIVE: DO THIS

Turn money you already spend into pages

Cost: money you may already spend

A few hours a month

Shows in 3–12 months

- 1 List everything you already sponsor**
Clubs, schools, events, charity raffles, the church roof. Write it down. Twenty minutes.
- 2 Email every one of them asking for a page**
A listing that names your business, links to your site and says what you do. The highest-return email in this guide.
- 3 Write it up on your own site too**
With real photos. The actual team in the actual kit, not a stock photo.
- 4 Enter awards, and treat the shortlist as the prize**
A shortlist gets you named on the organiser's site, in the local paper and in the roundups. Winning is better. Shortlisting is most of the value.

- 5 Give the local paper something it wants**
Local numbers and local human stories. How many breakdowns you attended in the first cold snap. The apprentice now running a van.
- 6 Be the person they ring**
Email your local business editor, say you're available for comment, and be genuinely useful when they call at short notice.
- 7 Find out which local outlets the assistants trust**
Ask ChatGPT and Perplexity about your trade and area, and note which local publications appear in the sources. Those are your targets.

JOB FIVE

What doesn't work, and what did

WATCH OUT

Two things in this space get sold hard and don't work

Wire press releases. One analysis across 3,600 prompts and ten industries found press releases captured a negligible share of AI citations. The wire distributes news; it isn't a route into AI answers.

Paid or manufactured mentions. Google names seeking inauthentic mentions as a tactic that isn't as helpful as it might seem, and says its spam systems apply to AI features too.

Earned coverage from a real editor is the thing that counts. There's no shortcut worth buying.

PROOF

PKB Civils: £200k in year one, on the boring stuff

£200k

attributed results

32%

of traffic organic

600

LinkedIn subscribers
from nothing

No viral campaign. No national coverage. Content, consistency, and turning up where their buyers already looked.



STEVE SAYS

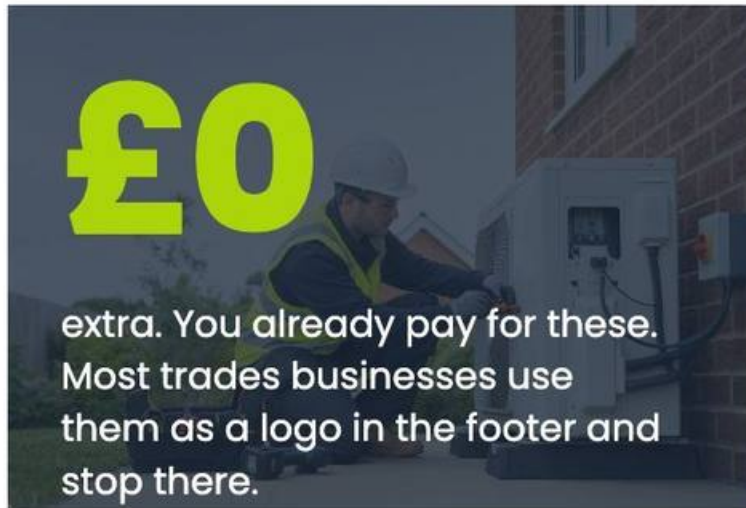
The coverage that does the work is unglamorous and local. The assistants are trying to work out what you are and where you work. Local coverage answers both at once.

6

JOB SIX

Put your accreditations into words

Gas Safe, NICEIC, NAPIT, TrustMark, MCS, FMB, manufacturer schemes: say them in text, with numbers, and link to the register.



WHAT'S CHANGED

An assistant asked to recommend a gas engineer is trying to avoid one thing: recommending someone unqualified. Your register entry is a page on a trusted website that confirms you exist, do what you say, and work where you say.

That's the machine checking you out, and it can only check what it can read.

When Google's AI answered questions about choosing a plumber, the things it thought mattered were safety, expertise, work quality and warranties. That's exactly what an accreditation answers.

JOB SIX: THE KEY INSIGHT

A logo is an image. An image has no words in it.

WHAT YOU HAVE NOW

[accreditation logo: an image file]

Invisible to every system that reads your site. It says nothing, because there is nothing to read.

WHAT TO WRITE INSTEAD

Gas Safe registered, registration number 123456, covering Hull and East Yorkshire.

A sentence every system can read, with a checkable number in it. Keep the logo as well. Just don't rely on it.

IN MONEY

This is the best return-on-effort job in the guide, because the money is already spent. You're paying the Gas Safe fee, the NICEIC assessment, the manufacturer scheme. You're just not getting the digital value out of it. It converts better too: a nervous homeowner can check a registration number in ten seconds.

JOB SIX: DO THIS

Two or three hours, once, on money you've already spent

Cost: already paid

2–3 hours, once

Shows in 1–2 months

1 Check every register entry is right

Trading name, address, phone, scope of work, area. Registers are notorious for holding details from three years ago. Ring them and fix it.

2 Make sure your entry is public

Some schemes let you choose visibility. Choose visible, then search your name plus the scheme name and confirm the page comes up.

3 Write it out in words

On your homepage, your relevant service pages and your Google Business Profile description. Scheme name, registration number, area covered.

4 Name the number

Registration numbers are specific, checkable facts, and specific checkable facts are what gets quoted.

5 Link out to your register entry

From your site, to the public page that proves it. Customers use it. So does everything crawling you.

6 Keep the manufacturer schemes current

Approved installer schemes usually come with a listing on the manufacturer's site: a high-authority page naming your business and your area, usually free with the accreditation.



Write your one-line entity sentence today

Business name, what you are, what you do, where, key accreditation. Then paste that exact sentence into six places.

Videtta Heating Ltd is a Gas Safe registered heating and plumbing company serving Essex, registration 123456.

Google Business Profile description

Every directory listing

Homepage introduction

LinkedIn bio

Email signature

Invoice footer

One consistent statement repeated across many sources is how a machine becomes certain about what you are.

WATCH OUT

Never imply an accreditation you don't hold, or overstate what it covers. "Gas Safe registered engineers" when you subcontract the gas work is the kind of claim that ends badly. Never invent a certification you can't produce the certificate for.

7

JOB SEVEN

Get talked about

The number of places on the web where your business name appears, and the words sitting next to it.



3x

Being talked about across the web correlates roughly three times more strongly with AI visibility than the number of links

WHAT'S CHANGED

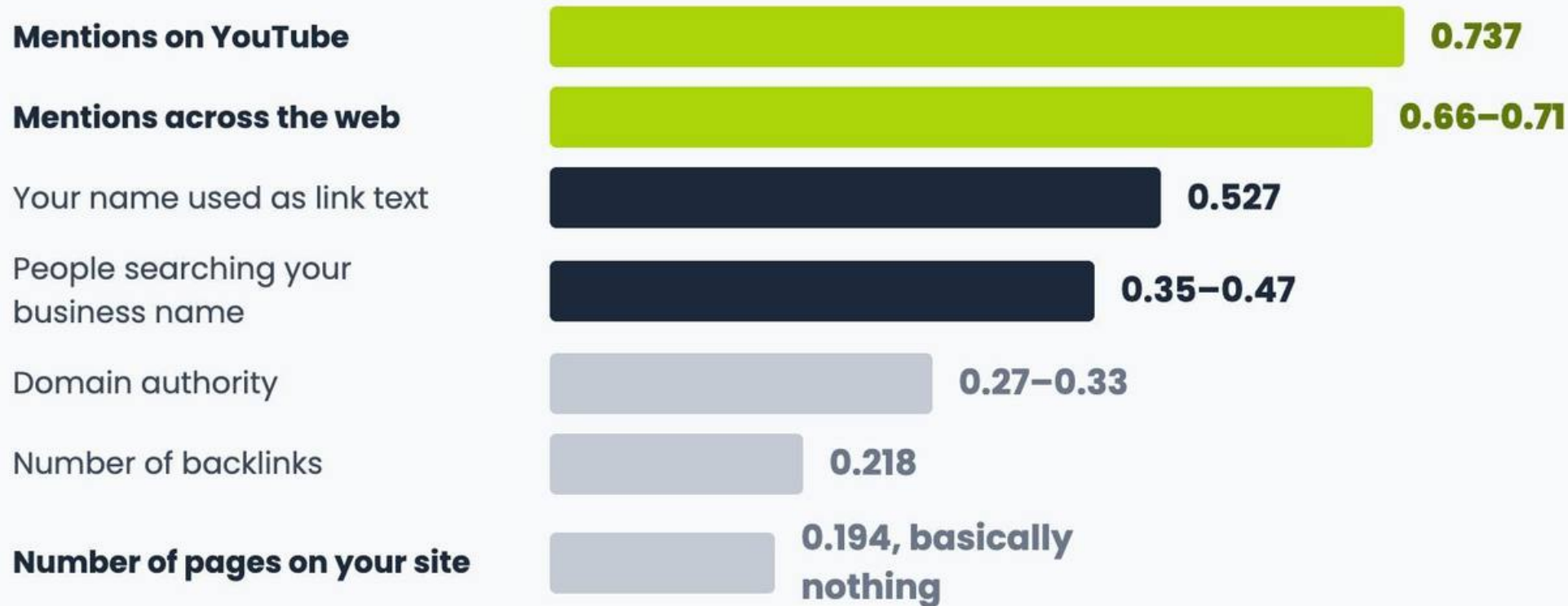
This is the strongest measurable signal there is. Ahrefs studied 75,000 brands to see which signals lined up with being named by ChatGPT, Google AI Mode and AI Overviews. The results reorder everything most agencies still sell.

Brands earning the most web mentions got up to **ten times** more AI Overview mentions than the next group down. And **26%** of brands got no mentions at all.

Ahrefs, 75,000 brands, December 2025. Spearman correlation, and correlation is not proof of cause.

JOB SEVEN

What's talked about beats what's built



Ahrefs, 75,000 brands, December 2025. Spearman correlation on brands with Domain Rating above 40. Correlation is not cause.

JOB SEVEN: DO THIS

A consequence, not a task

Cost: nothing directly

It's the output of Jobs 2, 5, 6 and 9

Shows in 12–18 months

You don't buy brand mentions. Google's guidance specifically warns against seeking inauthentic ones. You earn them. The payoff is being the name that comes up: not a link somebody clicks, but the firm the machine mentions, and the customer then searches for by name.

1 **Be consistently nameable**

Same business name everywhere, in the same form. Not sometimes "Videtta", sometimes "Videtta Heating Ltd", sometimes "Videtta Heating & Plumbing". Every variant splits the signal.

2 **Get your name next to your trade and your town**

Keywords in the text surrounding unlinked brand mentions ranks 47th of 187 for AI visibility. It isn't only whether your name appears. It's whether "boiler", "Hull" and "heat pump" appear near it.

3 **Watch branded search volume as your real scoreboard**

When someone sees your name in an AI answer and searches for you two days later, no referral report will show it.

4 **Accept the timescale**

This compounds over 12 to 18 months. It's the last thing to move and the hardest to fake, which is exactly why it correlates.



There's an uncomfortable finding buried in that study. Across all three assistants, the same brands generally show up. The overlap is 0.75 or higher. Big brands win everywhere, just by different routes. What that means for you isn't defeatism. It means don't fight for "best boiler installer UK". Fight for "best boiler installer in your town", where the field is fifteen firms instead of fifteen hundred, and where you can plausibly become the most talked-about name in the set.

STEVE MARK, FOUNDER, WE ARE SMC



8

JOB EIGHT

Make sure the machine can read your site

Half a day of checks that decide whether ChatGPT, Claude and Perplexity can see any words on your website at all.

0

Times JavaScript was executed across more than 500 million page fetches by ChatGPT's crawler.

Vercel and MERJ, December 2024

WHAT'S CHANGED

Most AI crawlers cannot run JavaScript. They fetch the raw code your server sends, take whatever words are in it, and leave.

They don't wait. They don't come back for a second look. ChatGPT's crawler downloaded JavaScript files in around 11.5% of requests without running them. Anthropic's ClaudeBot downloaded them in around 23.8% and never ran them.

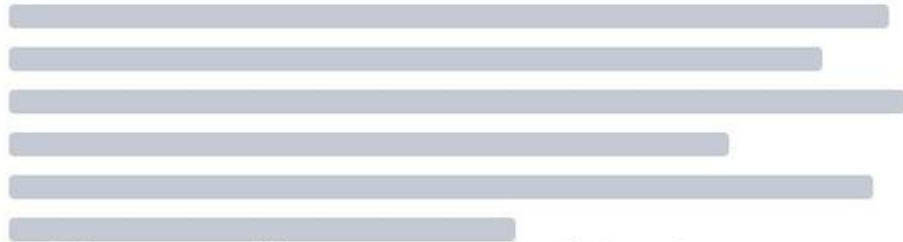
The exception is Google's own crawler, because Googlebot has done it for years.

JOB EIGHT

The same page, seen two ways

WHAT A HUMAN SEES

How much does a new boiler cost in Hull?



A full page, ranking on page one of Google.

WHAT GPTBOT SEES



An empty div and a pile of script tags. The words are assembled in the browser, and the crawler never runs the browser.

Your page can rank on page one of Google and be a completely blank box to ChatGPT, Claude and Perplexity at the same time.

STEVE SAYS

I'll declare an interest so you can discount it. We build client sites static and server-rendered now, and this is one of the reasons. But you don't need to rebuild anything to get the benefit of this page. Run the view-source test. If your text is there, you're fine, and no amount of rebuilding will improve your AI visibility. That's the honest version, and it costs me a project sometimes.

JOB EIGHT: DO THIS

The cheapest insurance in the guide

Cost: £0 to check

Half a day

Immediate once fixed

1 Do the view-source test: 30 seconds

Right-click your most important page, **View Page Source**, not Inspect Element. Ctrl+F for a sentence of your body text. There: you're fine. Not there: most AI crawlers see nothing.

2 If it fails, get it server-rendered

A developer job, not a marketing one. Astro, Next.js, Nuxt and plain static HTML all do this by default. A single-page app built 2018–2024 fails until you've checked.

3 Check your robots.txt isn't shutting the door

The big AI bots respect robots.txt consistently. Your instructions are honoured, and so are your mistakes.

4 Verify in Bing Webmaster Tools

Free, fifteen minutes, one click to import from Search Console. The most commonly skipped job in the whole guide, and the gateway to ChatGPT and Copilot.

5 Turn on IndexNow

Pings search engines the moment you publish instead of waiting to be crawled. Most WordPress SEO plugins have a toggle. Five minutes.

6 Give every service its own page

The single highest-scoring local organic factor of all 187. Lumping boilers, bathrooms, heat pumps and landlord certificates onto one page is the most common structural mistake in trades websites.

7 Then stop

HTTPS. Mobile-friendly. Under two seconds. Name, address and phone in the page text, matching your Google profile. Accurate local business schema. No more technical spend until Jobs 1 to 7 are underway.

JOB EIGHT

Which bot belongs to which assistant

Crawler	Belongs to	What blocking it costs you
OAI-SearchBot	OpenAI	ChatGPT search can't find you
ChatGPT-User	OpenAI	ChatGPT can't open your page for a user
GPTBot	OpenAI	Affects training, not search
ClaudeBot, Claude-User	Anthropic	Claude can't read you
PerplexityBot	Perplexity	Perplexity can't cite you
Google-Extended	Google	Affects Gemini
Bingbot	Microsoft	Copilot and much of ChatGPT can't see you
CCBot	Common Crawl	Training only. Safe to block if you'd rather.

WATCH OUT

There is no Search Console for ChatGPT. A website update that quietly moves your content into a browser-built component can make your pages unreadable overnight, and no dashboard will warn you. Put the view-source test in your routine after every significant website change. Ten seconds, and it's the only early warning you'll get.

9

JOB NINE

Point a phone at your work

Videos that say your business name out loud, on YouTube, embedded on the matching page of your site.

0.737

Mentions on YouTube showed the strongest link with AI visibility of any factor tested, stronger than web mentions, links or domain authority.

Ahrefs, 75,000 brands

WHAT'S CHANGED

This job is on almost nobody's list. The data says it should be near the top. A "YouTube mention" means your business name appearing in a video title, description or transcript.

It's heavily quoted. YouTube is the most-cited website in Ahrefs' AI Overview tracking, and ChatGPT's sixth most-cited site, despite OpenAI not owning it.

It's in the training data too. GPT-4 was reported to have been trained on over a million hours of YouTube transcripts.

The number of mentions mattered slightly more than views. You don't need a viral video. You need to be named, by name, in videos that exist.

IN MONEY

The same hour pays you twice

RETURN ONE

Being named by the machine

The strongest single correlation in the whole dataset, and it held up across ChatGPT, Google AI Mode and AI Overviews alike.

You don't need production value. You need your name said out loud, transcribed, and indexed.

RETURN TWO: THE ONE YOU'LL FEEL FIRST

Getting through the front door

Video is the fastest way to break down the barrier a stranger has about letting a tradesperson into their house. It shows your face, your van, your standard of work.

For heat pumps, solar, extensions and rewires, that's a close-rate change, and it arrives long before any machine reads the transcript.

An hour a week, no equipment beyond the phone in your pocket, and two separate returns from the same effort.

JOB NINE: DO THIS

Five habits, one hour a week

Cost: £0, you own a phone

1 hour a week

Shows in 3–12 months

1 **Say your business name out loud in every video**

At the start and at the end. It gets transcribed. That's the whole mechanism. A video where you never say who you are contributes nothing to this.

2 **Film the work you're already doing**

A three-minute walkthrough of a boiler swap. A before-and-after on a rewire. An honest explanation of why a quote came in where it did. Phone footage is fine.

3 **Answer your question list on camera**

Take the list from Job 1 and film the top twenty. One question per video, titled as the question. Then embed each video on the matching page from Job 2.

4 **Write real descriptions**

Business name, what the video shows, where you work, and a link back to the matching page on your site. The description is text, and text gets read.

5 **Get other people's videos to mention you**

A supplier's installer feature. A local business podcast. A manufacturer's case study. A customer's own review video. Each one is a mention you didn't have to film.

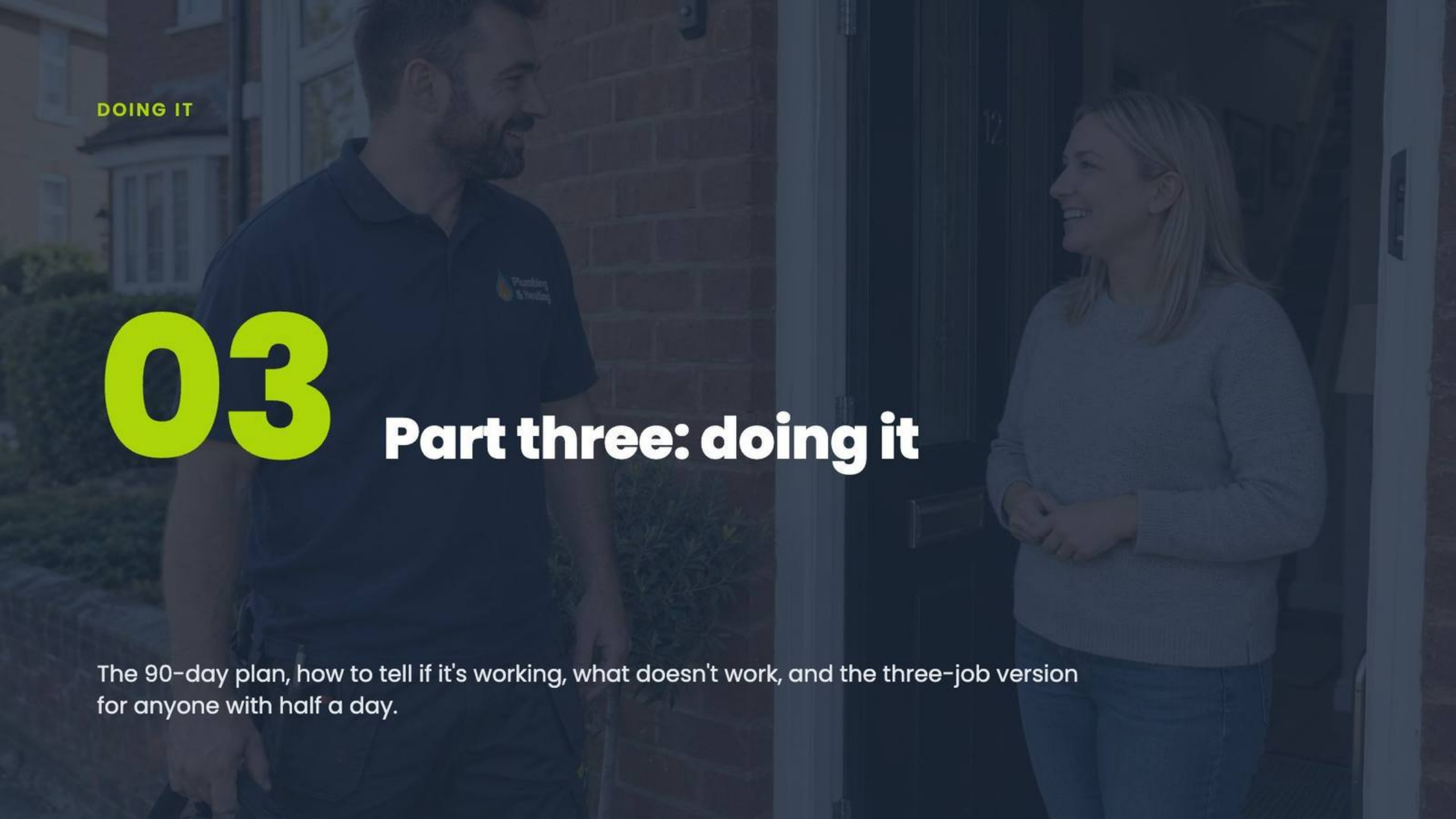


Film one thing this week, badly

The barrier to video in this trade is almost never capability. It's self-consciousness. Point a phone at the job, explain what you're doing and why, say your business name, upload it.

Nobody expects a film crew from a heating firm, and the rough ones often perform better than the polished ones. The businesses that enjoy their own marketing are the ones that keep doing it.



A man in a dark blue polo shirt with a 'Plumbing & Heating' logo is smiling and talking to a woman with blonde hair who is standing in a doorway. The background is a brick wall and a residential street.

DOING IT

03

Part three: doing it

The 90-day plan, how to tell if it's working, what doesn't work, and the three-job version for anyone with half a day.

THE 90-DAY PLAN: MONTH ONE

Find out where you stand, and open the doors

This assumes one person inside the business giving it a few hours a week, plus a developer for a day. If that person is you and you're on the tools, halve the ambition and double the timeline.

Week	Do this	Job	Cost
1	Run your top ten questions through Google, ChatGPT and Gemini. Record who's named and whether you are. Do the same for your trade plus your town. Screenshot it and date it.	1	£0
2	View-source test on five key pages. Check robots.txt. Verify in Bing Webmaster Tools, submit your sitemap, turn on IndexNow. Fix anything broken.	8	£0 + dev
3	Write your one-line entity sentence and put it everywhere. Audit every directory and register entry against it. Fill every empty field on Google, Bing Places, Apple Maps and Facebook.	4, 6	£0
4	Brief whoever answers the phone to log every pre-booking question in the customer's words. Set up an automatic review request. Reply to every unanswered review you have.	1, 3	£0

End of month one: you know your baseline, the doors are open, and two habits are running. Cash spent: nothing, unless the view-source test failed.

THE 90-DAY PLAN: MONTHS TWO AND THREE

Start publishing, start being mentioned, then decide

Week	Do this	Job
5–6	Take the top five questions from your list. One page each. Answer in the first 50 words. Real numbers. The bit only you could write. Named author. Dated. Film each one while you're at it.	2, 9
7	If your services are lumped on one page, split them. One page per service, the highest-scoring local organic factor of 187, and it's a day's work.	8
8	List everything you sponsor. Email each one asking for a page. Introduce yourself to your local business editor. Diarise two award deadlines.	5
9–11	Five more pages. Five more videos. Start asking for reviews on a second platform. Submit the award entries. Pitch one local story with a number in it.	2, 3, 5, 9
12	Re-run the week 1 baseline. Same questions, same wording, same day of the week. Compare. Check branded searches in Search Console. Then decide what to keep and what to drop.	7

Week 12 is a review, not a verdict. The parts that matter most compound over 12 to 18 months.

IN MONEY

What 90 days actually costs you

£0–500

Cash out of the door, unless the site needs server-rendering work.

6–8 days

Internal time, spread across three months.

Half a day

Developer time, or a few days if the view-source test failed.

WHAT'S REALISTICALLY MOVED BY DAY 90

Listings fixed. Ten pages live and indexed. Reviews accumulating on two platforms. Two award entries in. Three or four new mentions earned. Baseline measured twice.

WHAT HASN'T MOVED YET

Being reliably named by AI assistants. That's a 12 to 18 month job, and nobody can shorten it.

WATCH OUT

If somebody promises you AI visibility in 90 days, this plan is the thing to hold them to. Ask which of these twelve weeks they're doing, and what they expect each one to move.

There is no rank tracker for this

70%

of the time, AI Overview content changes for the same search.

Half

the sources get swapped when it regenerates. Named Tuesday, gone Thursday, nothing changed at your end.

Anyone selling you a guaranteed position, a “ChatGPT ranking” or a score from a tool they claim uses Google's internal data is confused or lying.

Google says it plainly in its own guidance: be wary of third-party tools that promise ranking success or claim to use internal Google metrics, because no third-party tool has access to its systems.

So measure it the way you'd measure word of mouth. Directionally, cumulatively, honestly.

STEVE SAYS

Rankings and traffic are proxies. The phone ringing is the only metric that counts. A founder does not care whether a keyword moved from eleventh to sixth, and is right not to care. Report honest progress, keep saying we're not done, and keep their actual goal in front of you. That last bit, saying their goal back to them, is the part most agencies never do.

HOW TO TELL IF IT'S WORKING

The three that actually tell you something

1

Enquiries, and where they say they came from

Add one question to your enquiry process: "How did you find us?" Then log the answer. When "ChatGPT told me about you" or "I read your page about boiler pressure" starts appearing, you'll know before any tool tells you.

The cheapest and best measurement available to you, and almost nobody does it. Five minutes to set up.

2

People searching your business name

In Google Search Console, filter to searches containing your business name and watch the monthly trend. When someone sees you in an AI answer and looks you up two days later, this is the only place it shows.

Only about one in ten marketers monitors this. Five minutes a month.

3

Your own prompt log

Twenty questions, three assistants, once a month, same wording, same day of the week. Columns: date, question, assistant, did an AI answer appear, were you named, who else was named, which sources were quoted.

Half an hour a month, and more honest than most paid tools, because you can see exactly what you measured.

Photograph this slide and copy the three columns straight into a spreadsheet.

HOW TO TELL IF IT'S WORKING

Three more worth watching, and what to ignore

4

Google's Generative AI report

Search Console gained dedicated reporting for AI features in 2026: impressions, pages, devices, visibility over time. It rolled out to some sites before others, so check whether you have it. The only first-party data anyone gets.

5

Visits from AI assistants

In Analytics, look for referrals from chatgpt.com, perplexity.ai, gemini.google.com and copilot.microsoft.com. Expect small numbers: Google sends roughly 190 times more traffic to websites. Low volume, often high intent.

6

Bing index coverage

In Bing Webmaster Tools, confirm your important pages are actually indexed. It's gate one for ChatGPT and Copilot, so treat it as an early warning rather than a result.

WHAT NOT TO TRACK

Your "position" in an AI answer, because there isn't one in any stable sense. How many pages you've published, because the data says page count has almost no relationship with AI visibility. Any tool that reports a score out of 100 without telling you how it was worked out.

QUICK WIN

Build your question list from your customers' sentences, not from keywords. "Who should I get to look at a boiler that keeps losing pressure in Hull?" is a realistic question. "boiler repair hull" is a keyword. That's why Job 1 comes first.

CHAPTER 17

Nine things that don't work

~~lms.txt files~~

Google says it doesn't use them. Nearly 300,000 domains showed no measurable link with AI citations.

~~Schema markup as an AI strategy~~

1,885 pages added it; AI citations moved -4.6% to +2.4%. Keep accurate schema for normal search results.

~~"Chunking" your content for AI~~

Google's guidance: no requirement. Its systems handle multi-topic pages fine.

~~Rewriting your site "for AI"~~

Google's guidance: not needed. The systems understand meaning and synonyms.

~~Buying brand mentions~~

Google names inauthentic mentions as a tactic that isn't as helpful as it seems. Bought can actively hurt.

~~Wire press releases~~

Negligible share of AI citations across 3,600 prompts and ten industries. Fine for news. Not a route in.

~~"200 listings for £99" packages~~

200 nearly-right entries you can't easily correct. The data rewards relevance, not volume.

~~Mass-producing pages for every town~~

Named in Google's scaled content abuse policy, and page count barely correlates with AI visibility.

~~Guaranteed placements in AI answers~~

Nobody can deliver this. The offer itself tells you everything about the seller.

And one genuine judgement call

Paying for a directory subscription

This isn't a myth. It's a decision, and the honest answer is it depends. The UK evidence says directories are what the assistants read. But it doesn't follow that a subscription pays for itself, because **the subscription buys you leads, not citations.**

The leads sum. Cost per month against jobs won and margin per job. An ordinary business decision, so do it on its own merits.

The citation question. Make sure every free and cheap listing you can have is accurate and complete first. That costs nothing and is read by the same systems.

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR ANYONE SELLING YOU AI VISIBILITY

- ✓ Which of the nine jobs are you doing, and in what order?
- ✓ What's your evidence it works, and can I read the study myself?
- ✓ What will you measure, and what's my baseline today?
- ✓ What are you deliberately *not* doing, and why?
- ✓ What would make you tell me this isn't working?

A good supplier will have answers to all five. The rest will change the subject.

If you build for other builders, read this

The nine jobs are the same. The buyer is completely different.

One extra invitation to tender can justify a year of this work, and a procurement person who can't verify you online doesn't ring to ask.

CHAPTER 18

Two buyers, two different jobs

The nine jobs are the same. **The buyer is completely different**, and that changes where the money goes. A procurement lead isn't asking "who would you recommend". They're shortlisting, then looking for reasons to strike a name off.

	Home services	Construction and civils
Who's asking	Homeowner, panicking or planning	Procurement, developer, main contractor
What they're doing	Finding someone to ring	Shortlisting, then verifying
What convinces them	Reviews, photos, accreditations, answering the phone	Track record, accreditations, financial standing, safety record, named schemes
The lists that matter	Checkatrade, MyBuilder, TrustATrader, Which? Trusted Traders	Constructionline, CHAS,SSIP, approved supplier lists, trade associations
The press that matters	Local paper, community sites	Construction trade press, regional business press
The platform that matters	Google, Facebook	LinkedIn, by a distance
The proof that matters	A finished bathroom	A completed scheme, with value, duration and client named

Six changes for a construction buyer

- 1 Make your project record public and specific**
One page per scheme: client, location, value or value band, duration, scope, what was difficult, what was delivered. That's "unique content" in Google's exact sense.
- 2 Treat accreditations as the spine, not the footer**
Constructionline, CHAS, SSIP, ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001, your safety record. Named, numbered, linked to the public register, stated in words.
- 3 Put LinkedIn at the centre**
Company page current. Directors posting about real schemes. Consistent naming. This is Job 7, delivered on the platform your market actually reads.
- 4 Get into the trade press**
Regional construction titles, sector publications, contract award announcements. It does for you what the local paper does for a plumber, and carries more weight.
- 5 Ask your existing clients why they chose you**
In civils the insight lives inside your current client base. Their answer is your positioning, your messaging and your content plan, and it's usually not what you'd have guessed.
- 6 Answer the pre-tender questions in public**
How you handle RAMS, how you sequence works on a live site, what your programme looks like, how you deal with unexpected ground conditions. Trust before the first conversation.

IN MONEY

One extra invitation to tender can justify a year of this work

Your job values run into six and seven figures, which makes the maths far more forgiving than it is for a domestic installer.

But the failure mode is worse. A procurement person who can't verify your track record online doesn't ring to ask. They move to the next name, and you never find out you were considered.



PROOF: PKB CIVILS, YEAR ONE

£200k

attributed results

32%

of traffic organic

600

LinkedIn subscribers
from zero

No real digital presence to start with. The mechanism was unglamorous: content that answered their buyers' questions, published consistently, and LinkedIn used properly rather than sporadically.

STEVE SAYS

There's a pattern in construction that barely exists in home services: the founder becomes the Oracle. Every question routes through them, because all the knowledge sits in their head. That's a bottleneck strangling their time. It's also exactly why the business has nothing publishable. Getting that knowledge out of one head is a business improvement first. A website worth quoting is the side effect.

CHAPTER 19

The three-job version

Most of this guide is optional. Three things are not. About six days spread over three months, close to £0, and it puts you ahead of the overwhelming majority of trades and construction businesses in the country.

1

Make sure you can be read

Right-click your most important page, View Page Source, search for a sentence of your body text. If it isn't there, nothing else in this guide can work. Then verify in Bing Webmaster Tools and confirm your key pages are indexed.

30 seconds to check, half a day to fix

2

Be on the lists, spelled right

Google Business Profile complete and correct. Bing Places, Apple Maps and Facebook the same. Every directory and register entry matching one consistent sentence. Reviews requested from every customer, on more than one platform, steadily.

One focused day

3

Publish the five answers only you could write

The five questions customers ask most often before they book. Honest, specific, numbered answers, with the detail that only comes from doing the job in your town. Name the author. Date it. Film each one while you're at it.

Five days, spread over ten weeks

SOURCES

Every figure, with its method and its limits

Google Search Central, optimising for generative AI features

Published 15 May 2026, updated 10 July 2026. Source for the mythbusting list, query fan-out, the unique-content examples and the Search Console report.

Whitespark, The Prevalence of AI Overviews in Local Search

540 manual searches, three US cities, six trades, May 2025. **Limits: US data, over a year old, modest sample.**

Murray Digital, what ChatGPT recommends for local trades

80 prompts, eight trades, ten UK towns, 405 sources, 25 August 2026. **Limits, stated by the author: one day, one wording, developer version, ChatGPT only.**

BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026

1,002 US adults, 11 February 2026, plus the AI-trust supplement of 10 March 2026. **Limits: US consumers, not UK.**

Whitespark, Local Search Ranking Factors 2026

47 experts scoring 187 factors, 6 November 2025. **Limits: an expert opinion survey, not measurement.**

Ahrefs: citations, brand factors and schema

863,000 searches and 4m AI Overview links (March 2026); 75,000 brands (December 2025); 1,885 pages adding schema (May 2026). **Correlation is not cause.**

Vercel and MERJ, The Rise of the AI Crawler

Over 500m GPTBot fetches, 17 December 2024. **Limits: no public re-measurement since.**

Also cited

SE Ranking (llms.txt, ~300,000 domains, observational); Peec AI (ChatGPT retrieval sources, May–July 2026); Wix (extraction position); BuzzStream and Citation Labs (3,600 prompts on press releases); searchVIU (live retrieval).

Compiled September 2026. Figures move. Re-check four before every reprint: AI Overview prevalence, the BrightLocal adoption number, the UK ChatGPT trades study, and Google's guidance page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Mark

20

YEARS MARKETING AND
GROWING TRADES AND
CONSTRUCTION
BUSINESSES

He started with his own print and design business, **uPrint**, serving trades from 2006 to 2014. That is where the relationship with the sector began. He went on to become **Brand Director and a board member at Vanarama**, where he learned marketing at commercial, board level, and learned that every strategy has to trace back to revenue and profit.

He's completed **Mark Ritson's Mini MBA in Marketing** and is a member of **Grafters**, the trades networking group. He is the founder of **We Are SMC**, an AI-first growth partner for trades and construction businesses, based in Leighton Buzzard.

ONE HONEST CALIBRATION

Twenty years marketing trades businesses is twenty years from the *outside*. He's never fitted a boiler or dug a trench and won't pretend otherwise. What he knows is how these businesses get found, get chosen and get bigger.



You don't need us for any of this

The three-job version is half a day, costs almost nothing, and will put you ahead of most of your competitors. **Do that first, whatever else you decide.**

If you'd rather someone else ran the whole thing, that's what We Are SMC does: the audit, the pages, the listings, the reviews, the local PR, the measurement. Only for trades and construction businesses, and only where the numbers make sense for both of us.

Book a 20-minute call

wearesmc.co.uk

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