— Strata Solutions

free guide · ai search

Why ChatGPT recommends your competitors instead of you

A 10-minute test to see where you stand, and the checklist we use to change the answer.

- Whether ChatGPT names you when buyers ask for what you sell
- Who it names instead, and the websites it trusts in your market
- The fix to start with, based on what you found

first, how it works

ChatGPT answers in two ways

way 1 · from memory

It answers from what it already knows

No search, no links. It names the companies it learned about, usually the bigger, older ones.

way 2 · it searches

It searches, reads, and shows sources

It picks the pages that answer the question best. This is where a smaller business can win.

You can't change what it remembers in a week. You can be the page it finds when it searches, and be on the websites it trusts. That's what the five fixes in this guide do.

> **From our tests, for a recruitment agency client**
>
> On that client's market, ChatGPT answered **20 of 41** buyer questions from memory, without searching.

Write 3 questions your buyers ask

Use what you sell, where, and who buys it. Leave your company name out. New buyers don't know it yet.

Example: a roofing company in Dallas

Who is the best roofing company in Dallas for storm damage?

How much does a roof replacement cost in Dallas?

Which roofers in Dallas handle insurance claims?

Your three questions

1

2

3

Tip: use the words customers use on calls, not the words on your website.

Ask ChatGPT, twice each

1. Open ChatGPT and click **Temporary** at the top right, so your own chat history doesn't shape the answer.
2. Paste question 1 and note what happens. Then open a new temporary chat and ask it again.

   Answers change from one run to the next, so one answer is not a result. "Sources" are the links or website names ChatGPT shows with its answer.
3. Do the same for questions 2 and 3. That's six answers, about 10 minutes.

Q	Named you? run 1 · run 2	Showed sources?	Named instead	Sites it linked to
1	☐ ☐	☐		
2	☐ ☐	☐		
3	☐ ☐	☐		

What your result means

if		
It named you in most answers	→	**You're in.** Keep it: re-run the test monthly, keep your profiles current (fix 4) and measure visits (page 11).
It named you sometimes	→	**You're in the pool, not the pick.** Open the sites it linked to. That's the gap. Fixes 3, 4 and 5.
Not named, and it showed sources	→	**It searched and found other pages.** Your pages don't answer the question yet. Start with fixes 1, 2 and 3.
Not named, and no sources	→	**It answered from memory.** Ask again, adding "search the web". The sites it links to are the ones it trusts. Then fixes 4 and 5.

fix 1 of 5 · 5 minutes

Make sure ChatGPT is allowed in

ChatGPT searches the web with a crawler called OAI-SearchBot. OpenAI says sites that block it aren't shown in ChatGPT's search answers.

1. Type **yourwebsite.com/robots.txt** into your browser.
2. Look for either block below. If you see one, send this page to whoever runs your website.

Blocks ChatGPT search

```
User-agent: OAI-SearchBot
Disallow: /
```

Blocks everyone, Google too

```
User-agent: *
Disallow: /
```

Blocking **GPTBot** is different: it stops OpenAI training on your content, and doesn't remove you from ChatGPT search. If your site sits behind Cloudflare or a security plugin, ask your web person to check there too.

fix 2 of 5 · about an hour per page

Give each main service its own page

A page about one service matches a buyer's question far better than a homepage that lists everything.

What the page needs

The service in the title, and the place if buyers search by place: "Roof Replacement in Dallas"

The answer in the first two sentences: what you do, for whom, where, roughly what it costs

Proof (real jobs, photos, reviews) and the questions buyers ask

You don't need a page for every city. Add one where buyers search for that place, or the work differs there.

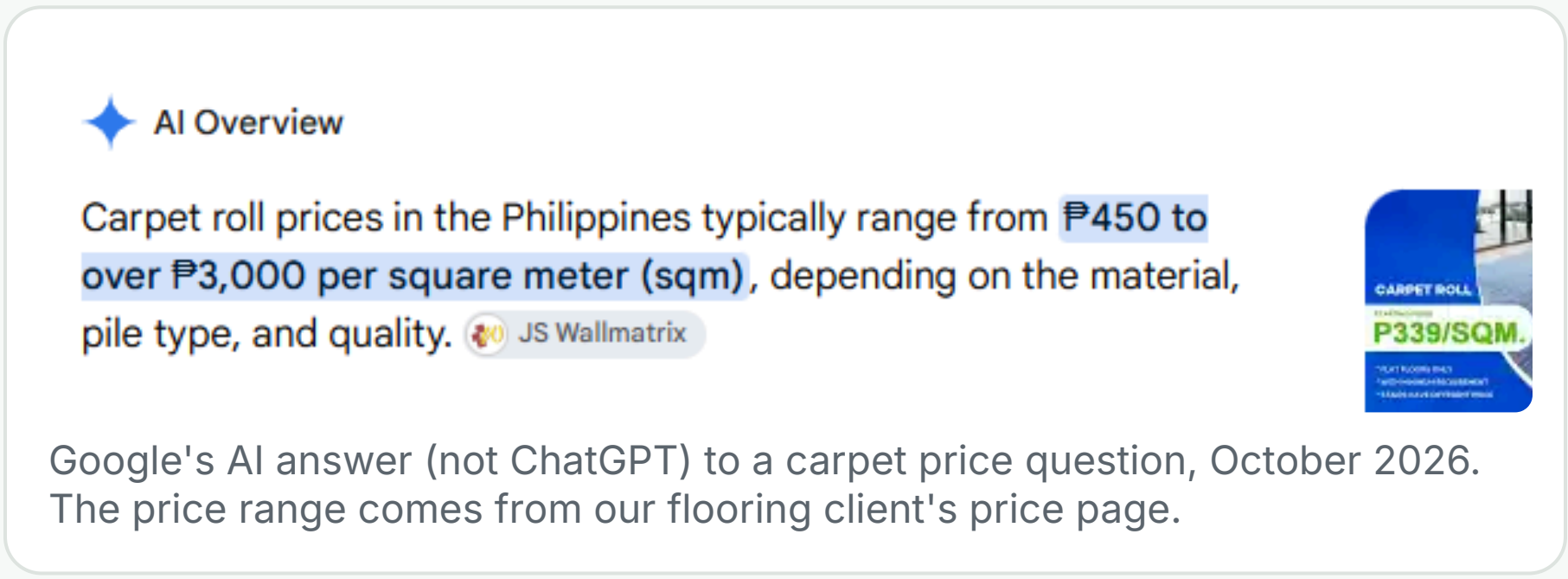
> **Same client**
>
> We built them five new pages: one for employers, and one each for Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Dammam. In a sample of 232 AI answers, **46 of the 48 links to their site went to those five pages.**

fix 3 of 5 · 30 minutes per question

Answer the exact question, with numbers

Buyers ask about cost, timing and which option to pick. Put each question on your site as a heading, in their words. Answer it in the first two sentences with real numbers: a price range, how long it takes, minimums. AI answers quote the page that has the number.

Find the questions in your inbox, your sales calls and Google's "People also ask" box.



Google's AI answer (not ChatGPT) to a carpet price question, October 2026. The price range comes from our flooring client's price page.

fix 4 of 5 · 15 minutes per profile

Fix your profiles on the sites AI checks

AI uses directories, review sites and Facebook to check you're real. Start with the sites from your test, plus Google Business Profile.

- [ ] Same business name, address, phone and website as your site, word for word
- [ ] Every service you offer, and the areas you serve
- [ ] Recent photos of real work, and reviews switched on
- [ ] Facebook: About section filled in, and a recent post

> **Same client**
>
> Their profile on one jobs directory was cited **42 times** across four AI engines. Across 60 Google AI answers to their buyers' searches, **Facebook was the second most-cited site.**

fix 5 of 5 · a few emails a month

Get on the "best of" lists

When someone asks for the best of anything, AI leans on pages that already rank the options.

1. Search Google for "best [service] in [city]" and "top [service] companies in [state]".
2. Open every list, plus any list from your test. Note who publishes it and whether you're on it.
3. Find how each one adds companies: a form, reviews, a paid listing, or an editor you can email.
4. Send editors facts they can use: your specialty, years in business, jobs done, your rating, a photo.

> **Same client**
>
> A "top recruitment agencies" list was the **4th most-cited page** in a full AI visibility run for our client's market. Our client wasn't on it.

then measure it · 5 minutes

See how many visits ChatGPT sends you

1. In Google Analytics, open **Reports → Acquisition → Traffic acquisition**.
2. Change the first column to **Session source** and type **chatgpt** in the search box.
3. Compare the last 28 days with the 28 days before.

This is a floor, not the full count. Visits from the ChatGPT app or a copied link often show up as Direct. Add "How did you find us?" to your contact form, with ChatGPT as an option.

Same client

118 → 1,081

ChatGPT visits to their site in the 23 days before their new pages went live, and in the 23 days after (Google Analytics, September to October 2026).

your plan

Start this week

Today · 15 minutes

- [ ] Run the test: 3 questions, twice each
- [ ] Check yourwebsite.com/robots.txt

This week

- [ ] Fix your profiles on the 3 sites ChatGPT linked to most
- [ ] Answer your top 3 buyer questions on your site, with numbers
- [ ] Look up your ChatGPT visits in Google Analytics

This month

- [ ] One page for each main service
- [ ] Contact the lists you're missing from
- [ ] Run the test again with the same 3 questions

next step

Ran the test? Send me what you found.

Reply to the message this guide came in with:

1. Your website
2. Who ChatGPT named instead of you

I'll tell you which fix I'd start with. If what you sell is a fit for what we do, I'll offer to record a short video going through your site.

The parts owners usually get stuck on are choosing which pages to build, writing them so they get cited, and keeping profiles and lists up to date every month. That's the work we do for clients.

Got this from a friend? Get your own copy:

DM "AI" to @deanofseo