STICKY FROG

The Human Algorithm Playbook.

The complete strategic guide to building AI search visibility.

For marketing leaders and in-house teams navigating the shift from traditional SEO to AI retrieval.

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CHAPTER 01

The Search Visibility Stack

Modern search does not happen in one place. Understanding the three layers is the foundation of everything that follows in this playbook.

The Old Model

For most of the last twenty years, search strategy meant one thing: rank on Google. The model was clear. You optimised your pages, built links, tracked positions. If you ranked, users clicked. If they clicked, they visited. Traffic was the measure of success.

That model worked because discovery was centralised. Google was the gateway. Optimise for the gateway, control your destiny.

What Changed

Discovery is no longer centralised. Your audience finds information in fundamentally different ways depending on their intent, their platform, their age, and the type of question they are asking.

THE OLD MODEL	THE NEW MODEL
- Single platform optimisation	+ Multi-layer visibility strategy
- Keyword-based ranking signals	+ Entity and topic association signals
- Click-through rate as success metric	+ Citation and retrieval as success metrics
- Domain authority as proxy for trust	+ Distributed recognition as trust signal
- Content volume as competitive strategy	+ Content structure and authority as strategy

The Three Layers

The Search Visibility Stack is the framework that organises this complexity. There are three distinct layers, and most businesses are only optimising for one of them.

Layer One: Traditional Search

Google and Bing organic results, featured snippets, and local search. The foundation of digital visibility. Still critical, but no longer sufficient on its own. This is the layer most SEO strategies address.

Layer Two: Discovery Platforms

YouTube, Reddit, LinkedIn, TikTok, podcasts, industry communities, and niche forums. Where your audience goes to learn, validate, and compare before they ever visit your website. Often ignored entirely by SEO strategies.

Layer Three: AI Retrieval

ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews. AI systems that synthesise answers from multiple sources without necessarily sending users to a website. The fastest-growing layer and the most poorly understood.

> *"The brands that compound their advantage in the next three years will not be the ones that dominated Layer One. They will be the ones that built across all three layers while their competitors were still fighting for keyword rankings."*

Why Most Strategies Only Cover One Layer

Layer One is measurable. Rankings, traffic, conversions. The tools exist. The reports are established. The KPIs make sense to leadership. Layers Two and Three are harder to measure, newer to the conversation, and require a different kind of thinking.

This is the strategic opportunity. While most marketing teams are still fighting for the last remaining clicks on a Google SERP that is shrinking, Layers Two and Three are wide open. The brands moving into them now will be the ones AI systems trust when citations become the

currency of discovery.

CHAPTER 02

The Human Algorithm

The term is simple: it is the process of turning genuine expertise into signals that both people and machines can recognise. Understanding it changes how you think about every piece of content you create.

From Keywords to Entities

Traditional SEO was built on keywords. You identified what people searched for and optimised your pages to match those queries. The machine matched strings of text. Authority was proxied by the number of other pages that linked to yours.

AI systems work differently. They do not match text strings: they retrieve knowledge organised around entities. An entity is a clearly defined thing in the world: a person, an organisation, a concept, a place. AI systems map relationships between entities and use these relationships to decide what is worth citing.

What AI Systems Actually Retrieve

When you ask ChatGPT or Perplexity about a topic, they do not go and crawl the web in real time. They retrieve from a structured internal representation of knowledge built from training data. The sources that made it into that representation with clear entity signals are the ones that get cited.

Is the entity clearly defined?

Does the internet have a consistent, structured understanding of what this organisation does, who it serves, and what it is authoritative about? Schema markup and About page content are primary signals here.

Is the entity associated with specific topics?

AI systems map entities to topic clusters. The clearer and more consistent your association with a specific set of topics, the stronger your retrieval signal for queries in that cluster.

Is the entity recognised by other credible entities?

Co-citation is the AI equivalent of the backlink. When credible sources mention your brand in connection with your topic, it reinforces your entity signals across the knowledge graph.

Is the content structured for extraction?

AI systems retrieve passages, not pages. Content that is structured with clear headings, direct answers, and FAQ-format sections is significantly more likely to be retrieved and cited.

The Core Principle

> *"Machines observe patterns. Humans create them. The Human Algorithm is the work of creating the right patterns: defining your entity clearly, associating it consistently with your topics, and building the recognition signals that AI systems draw on when they assemble an answer."*

CHAPTER 03

Entity Building from Scratch

Your entity is how AI systems understand what your brand is. If that understanding is unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent across the web, your AI retrieval signals are weak regardless of your traditional SEO performance.

Step 1: Write Your Entity Definition

Before you implement any schema or optimise any page, you need a clear written definition of your entity. This is the single most important document you will create from this playbook.

Your entity definition should answer four questions consistently, in the same language, across every platform you appear on:

What is it?	The type of entity. Organisation, person, product, concept.
What does it do?	The primary function or purpose, described in simple language.
Who does it serve?	The specific audience or customer, described precisely.
What is it known for?	The specific topics, frameworks, or ideas it is associated with.

Example Entity Definition

> *Sticky Frog is a search visibility consultancy specialising in AI-era search strategy. It serves marketing leaders and in-house marketing teams at established businesses who need to build visibility across modern search environments, including AI assistants, discovery platforms, and traditional search. Sticky Frog is known for the Search Visibility Stack*

framework, The Human Algorithm methodology, and the Foundation Sprint engagement model.

Step 2: Organisation Schema

Schema markup is the most direct signal you can give to AI systems about your entity. The Organisation schema on your homepage is foundational. Do not skip it, do not abbreviate it.

ORGANISATION SCHEMA TEMPLATE

```
{
"@context": "https://schema.org",
"@type": "Organization",
"name": "Your Brand Name",
"url": "https://yourdomain.com",
"logo": "https://yourdomain.com/logo.png",
"description": "Your entity definition in one sentence.",
"foundingDate": "2020",
"sameAs": [
"https://www.linkedin.com/company/your-company",
"https://twitter.com/yourhandle",
"https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Your_Company"
],
"contactPoint": {
"@type": "ContactPoint",
"email": "hello@yourdomain.com",
"contactType": "customer service"
}
}
```

Step 3: SameAs Links

The sameAs property tells AI systems that your entity is the same as specific profiles across the web. This is how the knowledge graph builds confidence that your entity is real, established, and consistently described.

Priority SameAs Link Targets

- ✓ LinkedIn company page (or personal profile if you are the entity)
- ✓ Twitter / X profile
- ✓ Google Business Profile
- ✓ Wikipedia article (if one exists)
- ✓ Wikidata entry (create one if you are serious)
- ✓ Crunchbase profile
- ✓ Companies House / official registry (for UK businesses)
- ✓ Industry directory listings (sector-specific)
- ✓ YouTube channel
- ✓ Podcast guest appearances (Spotify, Apple)

CHAPTER 04

Schema Markup That Works

Schema is not a technical box to tick. It is a communication layer between your content and AI systems. The right schema, implemented correctly, significantly improves your retrieval signals.

The Four Schema Types That Matter Most

Organisation	Your entity definition. Goes on your homepage and About page. The most foundational schema implementation.
FAQ	The highest-value schema type for AI retrieval. Makes your Q and A content directly parseable as citation material. Goes on any page with question-and-answer content.
Article	Signals authorship, publication date, and topic association for editorial content. Essential for blog posts and guides.
BreadcrumbList	Establishes content hierarchy. Helps AI systems understand how your content is organised. Often overlooked, always worth doing.

FAQ Schema: Your Highest-Value Implementation

FAQ schema is the single highest-return schema implementation for AI visibility. When your page includes FAQ schema, AI systems can directly read your questions and answers as structured knowledge. This is what gets cited.

FAQ SCHEMA TEMPLATE

```
{
```

```
"@context": "https://schema.org",
"@type": "FAQPage",
"mainEntity": [
{
"@type": "Question",
"name": "What is [your topic]?",
"acceptedAnswer": {
"@type": "Answer",
"text": "Direct, complete answer in 2-3 sentences."
}
},
{
"@type": "Question",
"name": "How does [process] work?",
"acceptedAnswer": {
"@type": "Answer",
"text": "Step-by-step answer. Clear. No filler."
}
}
]
}
```

Writing FAQ Content That Gets Retrieved

The schema alone is not enough. The question and answer content itself must be written to AI standards: direct, specific, and complete in itself.

Good FAQ answers:

- ✓ Start with a direct answer to the question, not context or preamble
- ✓ Are 2-4 sentences long — enough to be complete, short enough to be extracted cleanly
- ✓ Include the key phrase from the question in the answer naturally
- ✓ Stand alone: readable without requiring context from surrounding content
- ✓ Use plain language — avoid jargon unless the audience specifically uses it

CHAPTER 05

Content Architecture for AI Retrieval

AI systems retrieve passages, not pages. How you structure your content — headings, paragraphs, answer placement — determines how retrievable it is. Good content written badly will not get cited.

The Answer-First Principle

Most content buries the answer. It opens with context, history, qualifications, and preamble before getting to what the reader actually needs. This is a holdover from broadcast writing and it actively harms AI retrieval.

AI systems scan for the first direct, complete statement that answers the implied question. If your content does not provide that in the first two sentences, it will either retrieve from a different source or produce a less accurate answer.

BEFORE	AFTER
"AI search optimisation is a rapidly evolving field that has gained significant attention in recent years as artificial intelligence systems have become increasingly prominent in how users find information online. In this article, we will explore what it means and why it matters..."	*"AI search optimisation is the process of structuring your brand's content and entity signals so that AI systems — including ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity — can accurately retrieve and cite your brand in answers to relevant questions."*

Heading Hierarchy for Passage Extraction

Every heading in your content is a potential passage extraction point. AI systems use headings to understand what a section is about and to locate the relevant passage when answering a query.

- ✓ Use H2 for major topic sections — each H2 should represent a distinct, answerable concept
- ✓ Use H3 for sub-questions or specific aspects of the H2 topic
- ✓ Write headings as questions or clear statements — "How does X work?" not "Overview"
- ✓ Make each section self-contained: readable without the surrounding context
- ✓ Keep sections under 300 words where possible — shorter sections extract more cleanly
- ✓ Follow every heading with a direct, answer-first paragraph

The Optimal Page Structure

Title / H1	The primary question or topic the page addresses. Direct. Specific.
Opening paragraph	Direct definition or answer to the implied question. 2-3 sentences. No preamble.
H2 sections	Each covering a distinct sub-topic or question. Answer-first structure throughout.
FAQ block	Minimum 5 Q&A; pairs. Questions your audience actually asks. Schema marked up.
Author attribution	Clear first-person attribution where applicable. Builds entity association.

CHAPTER 06

The AEO Quick-Start Guide

Answer Engine Optimisation is the practice of structuring content so that AI systems can retrieve and cite it accurately. These are the 10 changes with the most immediate impact.

The 10 Changes. In Priority Order.

1	**Add Organisation schema to your homepage** If you do nothing else from this playbook, do this. Your entity definition in structured data form. Paste the template from Chapter 3 and fill in every field. Takes 30 minutes.
2	**Add FAQ schema to your three most important pages** Pick the pages that cover your core topics. Add 5 Q&A; pairs per page. Write the answers answer-first. Implement the schema. This is the highest-return content action.
3	**Rewrite your homepage opening paragraph** It should be a direct, complete answer to the question "What is this company and what does it do?" Two sentences. No preamble. No "Welcome to."
4	**Add an entity definition to your About page** Three paragraphs: what you do, who you serve, and why you do it differently. Use your entity definition document as the source. Keep it factual and specific.
5	**Create and verify your Google Business Profile** Even if you are not a local business. The GBP is a primary sameAs target and a direct signal to Google's knowledge graph about your entity.
6	**Complete and optimise your LinkedIn company page** LinkedIn is one of the most cited sources in AI answers about businesses and business topics. The company description should use your entity definition language exactly.

7	**Add H2 headings to your key pages as questions** Go through your top 10 pages. Anywhere a heading is vague ("Overview", "Introduction", "More Information") rewrite it as a direct question your audience would ask.
8	**Build or update your Wikidata entry** Wikidata is part of the knowledge graph that AI systems draw on directly. If you do not have a Wikidata entry, create one. Takes an hour and the returns compound over time.
9	**Publish one piece of original data or research** Original data is the fastest path to third-party citation. A survey, an analysis of your own client data, a proprietary benchmark. Other sources cite it. AI systems notice.
10	**Set up your monthly AI visibility test protocol** Use the testing template from Chapter 9. Test your key queries manually in ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity once a month. Record the results. Track the trend.

This Week vs This Month vs This Quarter

This week	This month	This quarter
Actions 1, 2, 3 Organisation schema, FAQ schema, homepage rewrite	Actions 4, 5, 6, 7 About page, GBP, LinkedIn, H2 headings	Actions 8, 9, 10 Wikidata, original data, testing protocol

CHAPTER 07

Building the Recognition Layer

Your website is a controlled environment. AI systems learn from the entire web. Building the Recognition Layer means building your presence across the sources AI draws on when it assembles an answer.

Why Your Website Is Not Enough

Most marketing teams operate from a single-domain mindset. Everything lives on the company website. The website is the hub. Traffic to the website is the goal. This made sense in 2015. It does not make sense now.

AI systems do not just read your website. They read the entire training corpus: articles, forum posts, directory listings, podcast transcripts, LinkedIn articles, Reddit threads, Wikipedia entries, and academic papers. Your website is one small source in a very large pool. The brands that get cited are the ones that appear consistently across multiple credible sources in connection with their topics.

> *"To AI, expertise is not self-declared. It is socially verified. The brands that appear in AI answers are rarely the ones that simply optimised a page. They are the ones the internet already recognises as part of the conversation."*

The Three Pillars of Recognition

Semantic Topic Association

Your brand is consistently mentioned alongside specific concepts and topics across the web. This builds hard connections in the Authority Graph — the AI equivalent of a strong backlink profile.

> *Actions: publish original thinking on your core topics, write guest content for industry publications, contribute expert commentary in media coverage, build a named framework that others reference by name.*

Distributed Mentions

Your brand appears across a multi-platform ecosystem of credible sources. Articles, communities, podcasts, newsletters, and social platforms all contribute reinforcement signals.

> *Actions: pursue podcast appearances, contribute to industry newsletters, participate meaningfully in LinkedIn and Reddit discussions in your category, build relationships with journalists who cover your space.*

Co-Citation

Your brand is frequently mentioned in the same context as other established experts and credible organisations in your field. You benefit from association with existing nodes of trust.

> *Actions: seek co-author opportunities, build relationships with industry analysts, get included in curated lists and round-ups, reference and be referenced by authoritative sources in your field.*

Cross-Platform Priority by Category

Not every platform matters equally for every category. This is the general priority framework, adjust based on where your specific audience actually spends time.

Platform	Best for	Priority
LinkedIn	B2B services, professional expertise, thought leadership	High for all B2B categories

YouTube	Any topic with educational or how-to dimensions	High — AI frequently cites YouTube
Reddit	Technical topics, consumer categories, community discussion	High for technical and consumer
Industry publications	Domain-specific authority building	High — depends on your sector
Podcasts (as guest)	Expertise and personal brand association	Medium-high, compounding over time
Wikipedia / Wikidata	Any established entity	High if you qualify for an entry
Twitter / X	Trending topics, news commentary	Medium — depends on category

CHAPTER 08

AI Workflow Setup for Your Team

The tools and workflows that help your team create content structured for AI retrieval from the start, rather than retrofitting it afterwards.

The Content Creation Workflow

Most content workflows are optimised for production speed. Write, edit, publish. AI-era content workflows need an additional layer: structure optimisation before publishing.

1. Define the primary question

Before writing a word of content, define the specific question the page or article is answering. Write it down. This question becomes your H1, informs your FAQ, and determines whether the content is retrievable.

2. Write the opening answer first

Draft a 2-3 sentence direct answer to the primary question. This is your opening paragraph. Do not bury it. Do not save it for the conclusion.

3. Structure with retrieval headings

Map out your H2 headings as questions or direct statements before writing. Each should address a sub-question someone might ask about the primary topic.

4. Write 5 FAQ pairs per piece

For any article or page, generate 5 questions your audience might ask about this topic. Answer them answer-first, 2-3 sentences each. Add to the page. Implement FAQ schema.

5. Check for AI readability before publishing

Ask yourself: if someone asked an AI assistant the primary question this content answers, would a passage from this page make a clean, citable answer? If not, revise before publishing.

Recommended Tools

Schema markup: Google's Structured Data Markup Helper for generating schema. Validate with Schema.org validator and Google's Rich Results Test before implementing.

AI visibility testing: Test your key queries manually in ChatGPT (gpt-4), Google Gemini, and Perplexity once a month. Record brand mentions, sentiment, and competitor citations. Keep a simple log.

Content readability: Hemingway Editor for sentence length and passive voice. Aim for Grade 8-10 reading level for most B2B content. AI systems parse simpler language more reliably.

Entity monitoring: Google Alerts for brand mentions. Set up alerts for your brand name, key executives, and your proprietary framework names. Each mention is a potential citation signal.

Knowledge Panel: Google Search Console to monitor how Google Knowledge Graph represents your entity. Search your brand name in incognito to see your current Knowledge Panel status.

CHAPTER 09

Measuring What Actually Matters

Traditional analytics was built for the Click Economy. If you only measure what those tools show you, you are measuring an increasingly incomplete picture of your brand's actual discoverability.

The Measurement Gap

83% of AI-driven search happens on mobile apps, in interfaces that do not pass referral data to your analytics. This is not a future problem: it is happening now. The gap between your actual discoverability and what your Google Analytics dashboard shows is growing every month.

This does not mean you stop measuring. It means you add a new measurement layer that reflects how discovery actually works in 2026.

The Metrics That Reflect AI Visibility

AI citation rate — Monthly manual test

How often your brand appears in AI answers for your key queries. Test manually in ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity. Record: cited, mentioned, not cited, incorrectly described.

Citation sentiment — Monthly manual test

When your brand is cited, how is it described? Positive, neutral, or negative? Does the description match your entity definition?

Competitor citation rate — Monthly manual test

Are competitors being cited in your category where you are not? This identifies specific gaps in your recognition signals.

Knowledge Panel completeness — Monthly check

Is your Google Knowledge Panel appearing? Is it accurate? Does it include your description, logo, and key attributes?

Cross-platform mention volume — Monthly count

How many times is your brand mentioned outside your own domain this month? Google Alerts gives you a reasonable proxy.

Direct and branded traffic — Monthly from GA

An underrated indicator. As AI visibility grows, branded search and direct traffic typically increase. People find you via AI, then search directly.

The Monthly Testing Protocol

This is the most important habit to build. On the same day each month, run the following tests and record the results in your tracking template.

1. Open ChatGPT (GPT-4), Gemini, and Perplexity in incognito windows
2. For each platform, test your top 5 category queries ("best [your category] in [your market]", "who are the leading [your service] providers?", etc.)
3. Record: does your brand appear? How is it described? Which competitors appear alongside you?
4. Test 3 branded queries per platform ("tell me about [your brand]", "what does [your brand] do?")
5. Screenshot any incorrect or missing descriptions
6. Note which competitors appear in your category queries but not you
7. Add all results to your monthly tracking spreadsheet
8. Compare to previous month: improving, stable, or declining?

CHAPTER 10

Your 90-Day Action Plan

Everything in this playbook, prioritised into a concrete 90-day sequence. This is your starting point, not your ceiling. Adjust the timing based on your team's capacity.

Days 1-30: The Foundation

The first 30 days are entirely about foundations. Nothing here is flashy. All of it compounds.

Week 1	Write your entity definition document. Implement Organisation schema on your homepage. Verify or create your Google Business Profile.
Week 2	Identify your three most important pages. Add 5 FAQ pairs to each. Implement FAQ schema on all three. Validate in Google's Rich Results Test.
Week 3	Rewrite your homepage opening paragraph. Rewrite your About page to include a clear entity definition. Update your LinkedIn company description to match.
Week 4	Build your sameAs link list. Create or update your Wikidata entry. Verify your entity is consistent across all platforms. Run your first monthly AI visibility test.

Days 31-60: Structure and Content

The second 30 days build the content architecture that makes your foundations retrievable.

Week 5-6	Audit your top 20 pages for H2 headings. Rewrite any vague headings as direct questions. Ensure each section opens with an answer-first paragraph.

Week 7-8	Add FAQ blocks to your five next most important pages. Publish one original data piece or in-depth analysis. Begin pursuing 2 podcast or guest article opportunities.

Days 61-90: Recognition and Compounding

The third 30 days build the cross-platform recognition signals that take time to compound.

Week 9-10	Publish 2 pieces of original thinking on your core topics. Ensure they are structured for AI retrieval. Implement Article schema on all blog content.
Week 11-12	Review your monthly AI visibility test results. Identify the 3 highest-priority gaps. Build a second 90-day plan based on what you learned. Run another visibility test to establish trend.

What Success Looks Like at 90 Days

The 90-Day Checkpoint

- ✓ Organisation and FAQ schema implemented on your key pages and validated
- ✓ Your brand appears in AI answers for at least 2 of your top 5 category queries
- ✓ Your LinkedIn, GBP, and key directory listings consistently use your entity definition language
- ✓ You have a monthly AI visibility testing habit established with a baseline to measure from
- ✓ At least one piece of original data or research published and beginning to attract mentions
- ✓ Your top 10 pages have answer-first opening paragraphs and retrieval-oriented H2 headings

> *"The brands that appear in AI answers are not the ones with the most content. They are the ones the web has already agreed to trust. This playbook is how you start building that agreement."*

STICKY FROG

About the Author

Jason Morris is a search visibility strategist with over 15 years of experience working with enterprise brands across Europe and the US. He has led search visibility strategy for Toyota Europe, Bupa, EY, Citi Bank, Vodafone, Deliveroo, PayPal, and American Express.

His work achieving the number one position for hybrid cars across Toyota Europe, and a Best Use of Search award, established the approach to entity-first search strategy that became the foundation of The Human Algorithm.

Sticky Frog is his independent search visibility consultancy, built on the principle that genuine expertise, properly structured, beats templated content at every level of modern search. The Human Algorithm Playbook is the written version of the strategic thinking behind every client engagement.

Want the foundations built for you?

The Foundation Sprint is a four-week engagement that builds everything in this playbook directly for your brand, with senior strategic guidance at every step. Four sessions. Clear deliverables. A 90-day roadmap ready to execute.

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