

★ Member-only story

# 48-Hour AEO Starter Kit

Your Complete Guide to Answer Engine Optimization

23 min read · Oct 14, 2025



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## Everything You Need to Start Getting Cited by AI Search

1. Quick Start Guide
2. Schema Code Library (Copy-Paste Ready)
3. Content Restructure Templates
4. 50 Test Queries by Industry
5. Citation Tracking Spreadsheet
6. Implementation Checklist

In my previous article you just learned that [Google AI Mode changed the game](#). Rankings don't matter as much as citations. But knowing *what* changed and knowing *what to do about it* are two different things.

### Google AI Mode 2025: How Query Fan-Out Changed Search (And What You Need to Do About It)

Google AI Mode's October 2025 rollout changed how search works. Query fan-out breaks your questions into pieces. Here's...

[alirezarezvani.medium.com](https://alirezarezvani.medium.com)



This starter kit is your implementation roadmap.



Answer Engine Starter Kit for LLMs — get your content into ChatGPT, Claude AI, Perplexity

**Inside, you'll find:**

**Copy-paste schema code** that takes 10 minutes to add (*and immediately increases your citation chances*).

**Content restructure templates** that show you exactly how to break your 5,000-word guides into citation-friendly modules

**50 test queries by industry** so you can see where you stand today and track your progress weekly

**Citation tracking spreadsheets** that turn messy data into clear action items

**Step-by-step checklists** that break the overwhelming task of “AEO optimization” into doable 1-hour blocks

*No fluff. No theory. Just practical tools you can start using in the next hour.*

**Here’s the truth:** The brands that will dominate AI search in 2026 aren’t the ones reading about AEO. They’re the ones implementing it *this week*. While your competitors are still trying to understand what happened, you’ll be 6 weeks ahead — with real data showing what works.

**Time investment:** 48 hours to implement the basics

**Expected outcome:** 20–35% citation rate within 30 days

**Cost:** Your time. Nothing else.

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## QUICK START GUIDE

### Hour 0–4: Assessment Phase

- ☐ Enable Google AI Mode in Search Labs
- ☐ Test 10 queries from your industry list (*Section 4*)
- ☐ Document who gets cited (use tracking spreadsheet in *Section 5*)
- ☐ Identify your top 5 pages to optimize

### Hour 4–12: Schema Implementation

- ☐ Add FAQ schema to top 3 pages (use code from *Section 2*)
- ☐ Add Article schema to blog posts
- ☐ Add Product/Service schema if applicable
- ☐ Test with Google Rich Results Test

### Hour 12–24: Content Restructure

- ☐ Pick one long-form article
- ☐ Use restructure template (*Section 3*)
- ☐ Break into 3–5 focused pieces

- ☐ Add internal links

## Hour 24–36: Multi-Modal Addition

- ☐ Record one 3–5 minute video
- ☐ Create transcript
- ☐ Add VideoObject schema
- ☐ Embed in top-performing article

## Hour 36–48: Publishing & Distribution

- ☐ Publish restructured content
- ☐ Share on LinkedIn with insights
- ☐ Post helpful answer on relevant Reddit
- ☐ Update tracking spreadsheet with baseline

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## SCHEMA CODE LIBRARY (COPY-PASTE READY)

### 1. FAQ Schema (Most Important for AEO)

When to use: Any page with questions and answers

Copy this code:

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "FAQPage",
  "mainEntity": [
    {
      "@type": "Question",
      "name": "What is [your topic]?",
      "acceptedAnswer": {
        "@type": "Answer",
        "text": "Your direct answer here. Keep it concise (50-100 words). Inclu
      }
    },
    {
      "@type": "Question",
```

```

    "name": "How does [your product/service] work?",
    "acceptedAnswer": {
      "@type": "Answer",
      "text": "Step-by-step explanation. Be specific. Include measurable outcomes."
    }
  },
  {
    "@type": "Question",
    "name": "What are the benefits of [your solution]?",
    "acceptedAnswer": {
      "@type": "Answer",
      "text": "List 3-5 specific benefits. Use concrete examples rather than generalizations."
    }
  },
  {
    "@type": "Question",
    "name": "Who should use [your product/service]?",
    "acceptedAnswer": {
      "@type": "Answer",
      "text": "Define your ideal user clearly. Include use cases or scenarios."
    }
  },
  {
    "@type": "Question",
    "name": "How much does [your product/service] cost?",
    "acceptedAnswer": {
      "@type": "Answer",
      "text": "Be transparent about pricing. Include ranges if exact pricing is not available."
    }
  }
]
}
</script>

```

### Implementation instructions:

1. Place this code in the `<head>` section of your HTML
2. Replace bracketed placeholders with your actual content
3. Add 3–7 questions per page (don't overdo it)
4. Test at: <https://search.google.com/test/rich-results>

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## 2. Article Schema (For Blog Posts & Guides)

**When to use:** Every blog post, guide, or article

**Copy this code:**

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Article",
  "headline": "Your Article Title (Max 110 characters)",
  "description": "Brief description of what this article covers (150-160 charac",
  "image": "https://yoursite.com/article-image.jpg",
  "author": {
    "@type": "Person",
    "name": "Your Name or Author Name",
    "url": "https://yoursite.com/about"
  },
  "publisher": {
    "@type": "Organization",
    "name": "Your Company Name",
    "logo": {
      "@type": "ImageObject",
      "url": "https://yoursite.com/logo.png"
    }
  },
  "datePublished": "2025-10-14",
  "dateModified": "2025-10-14"
}
</script>
```

**Pro tip:** Update `dateModified` every time you refresh the content to signal freshness to AI systems.

. . .

### 3. HowTo Schema (For Step-by-Step Guides)

**When to use:** Tutorials, processes, setup guides

**Copy this code:**

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
```

```

"@context": "https://schema.org",
"@type": "HowTo",
"name": "How to [accomplish specific task]",
"description": "Brief overview of what you'll accomplish",
"totalTime": "PT30M",
"estimatedCost": {
  "@type": "MonetaryAmount",
  "currency": "USD",
  "value": "0"
},
"tool": [
  {
    "@type": "HowToTool",
    "name": "Tool name needed for this process"
  }
],
"supply": [
  {
    "@type": "HowToSupply",
    "name": "Material or resource needed"
  }
],
"step": [
  {
    "@type": "HowToStep",
    "name": "Step 1 Title",
    "text": "Detailed instruction for step 1. Be specific.",
    "url": "https://yoursite.com/page#step1",
    "image": "https://yoursite.com/step1-image.jpg"
  },
  {
    "@type": "HowToStep",
    "name": "Step 2 Title",
    "text": "Detailed instruction for step 2.",
    "url": "https://yoursite.com/page#step2",
    "image": "https://yoursite.com/step2-image.jpg"
  },
  {
    "@type": "HowToStep",
    "name": "Step 3 Title",
    "text": "Detailed instruction for step 3.",
    "url": "https://yoursite.com/page#step3",
    "image": "https://yoursite.com/step3-image.jpg"
  }
]
}
</script>

```

**Time format guide:**

- PT30M = 30 minutes
- PT2H = 2 hours
- PT1H30M = 1 hour 30 minutes

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#### 4. VideoObject Schema (For Video Content)

**When to use:** Any page with embedded video

**Copy this code:**

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "VideoObject",
  "name": "Video Title",
  "description": "Brief description of video content",
  "thumbnailUrl": "https://yoursite.com/video-thumbnail.jpg",
  "uploadDate": "2025-10-14",
  "duration": "PT5M30S",
  "contentUrl": "https://yoursite.com/video.mp4",
  "embedUrl": "https://www.youtube.com/embed/YOUR_VIDEO_ID",
  "transcript": "Full transcript of your video. Include all spoken words. This
}
</script>
```

**Duration format:**

- PT5M30S = 5 minutes 30 seconds
- PT12M = 12 minutes
- PT1H5M = 1 hour 5 minutes

**Critical:** The transcript field is what AI systems extract. Don't skip it.

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#### 5. Product Schema (For E-commerce & SaaS)



**When to use:** Product pages, service pages, SaaS landing pages

**Copy this code:**

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Product",
  "name": "Your Product Name",
  "description": "Clear description of what your product does and who it's for",
  "brand": {
    "@type": "Brand",
    "name": "Your Brand Name"
  },
  "offers": {
    "@type": "Offer",
    "url": "https://yoursite.com/product-page",
    "priceCurrency": "USD",
    "price": "99.00",
    "priceValidUntil": "2025-12-31",
    "availability": "https://schema.org/InStock"
  },
  "aggregateRating": {
    "@type": "AggregateRating",
    "ratingValue": "4.8",
    "reviewCount": "127"
  }
}
</script>
```

**Availability options:**

- InStock
- OutOfStock
- PreOrder
- Discontinued

. . .

**6. Organization Schema (For About/Homepage)**

**When to use:** Homepage, About page

Copy this code:

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Organization",
  "name": "Your Company Name",
  "url": "https://yoursite.com",
  "logo": "https://yoursite.com/logo.png",
  "description": "What your company does in 1-2 sentences",
  "contactPoint": {
    "@type": "ContactPoint",
    "telephone": "+1-555-555-5555",
    "contactType": "Customer Service",
    "availableLanguage": ["English"]
  },
  "sameAs": [
    "https://www.linkedin.com/company/yourcompany",
    "https://twitter.com/yourcompany",
    "https://github.com/yourcompany"
  ]
}
</script>
```

. . .

## 7. Person Schema (For Personal Brand)

When to use: Author pages, personal websites, bio pages

Copy this code:

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Person",
  "name": "Your Full Name",
  "url": "https://yoursite.com",
  "image": "https://yoursite.com/your-photo.jpg",
  "jobTitle": "Your Professional Title",
  "worksFor": {
    "@type": "Organization",
    "name": "Company Name"
  },
}
```

```

"alumniOf": {
  "@type": "EducationalOrganization",
  "name": "University Name"
},
"sameAs": [
  "https://www.linkedin.com/in/yourprofile",
  "https://twitter.com/yourhandle",
  "https://github.com/yourusername"
],
"knowsAbout": [
  "Answer Engine Optimization",
  "Technical SEO",
  "Content Strategy",
  "AI Search"
]
}
</script>

```

**Pro tip:** The `knowsAbout` array helps AI systems understand your expertise areas.

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## SCHEMA IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Before you publish:

- ☐ Schema code is in `<head>` section (not body)
- ☐ All URLs are absolute (<https://yoursite.com/page>)
- ☐ All dates are in ISO format (YYYY-MM-DD)
- ☐ All required fields are filled (no placeholders left)
- ☐ Tested at <https://search.google.com/test/rich-results>
- ☐ No errors or warnings in Rich Results Test
- ☐ Images are under 200KB and properly formatted
- ☐ Text fields don't have HTML tags (plain text only)

. . .

## CONTENT RESTRUCTURE TEMPLATES

## Template 1: Breaking a Comprehensive Guide into Topic Clusters

Use this when: You have a 3,000+ word article covering multiple subtopics

### Step 1: Identify Core Topics

Original article: “Complete Guide to Email Marketing”

Identify 4–6 core subtopics:

1. Email marketing fundamentals
2. Building an email list
3. Writing effective subject lines
4. Email automation workflows
5. Measuring email performance
6. Email compliance (GDPR, CAN-SPAM)

### Step 2: Create Hub Page Structure

Main Hub Page (Keep your original URL):

```
# Complete Guide to Email Marketing
[Brief intro: 100–150 words explaining what email marketing is]
## What You'll Learn
This guide covers everything you need to know about email marketing:
- [What is email marketing and why it matters](link-to-article-1)
- [How to build an email list from scratch](link-to-article-2)
- [Writing subject lines that get opened](link-to-article-3)
- [Setting up email automation workflows](link-to-article-4)
- [Tracking and measuring email performance](link-to-article-5)
- [Email compliance and legal requirements](link-to-article-6)
## Quick Start: Email Marketing in 5 Steps
1. [Link] Choose an email service provider
2. [Link] Build your first email list
3. [Link] Write your welcome email
4. [Link] Set up your first automation
5. [Link] Track your results
## Frequently Asked Questions
[Add FAQ schema here with 5–7 common questions]
```

### Step 3: Create Focused Sub-Articles

Sub-Article Template:

```

# [Specific Topic]: [Benefit/Outcome]
**Example:** How to Build an Email List: From Zero to 1,000 Subscribers
## The Direct Answer (First 100 words)
[Answer the title question immediately. No preamble.]
Building an email list requires three core elements: a lead magnet (valuable co
## Why This Matters
[2-3 paragraphs on context and importance]
## The Complete Process
### Step 1: [Specific Action]
[Detailed explanation]
[Example]
### Step 2: [Specific Action]
[Detailed explanation]
[Example]
### Step 3: [Specific Action]
[Detailed explanation]
[Example]
## Common Mistakes to Avoid
- **Mistake 1:** [Description]
  - **Solution:** [How to fix]
- **Mistake 2:** [Description]
  - **Solution:** [How to fix]
## Real-World Examples
[2-3 anonymized case studies or examples]
## What to Do Next
Your next step: [Single, clear action]
For more on [related topic], read: [Link to another sub-article]
## Frequently Asked Questions
[Add FAQ schema with 3-5 questions specific to this subtopic]

```

## Step 4: Internal Linking Strategy

### Link from hub to spokes:

- Hub page links to all 6 sub-articles
- Each link uses descriptive anchor text
- Each link explains what the reader will learn

### Link between spokes:

- Each sub-article links to 2-3 related sub-articles
- Links appear naturally in context
- Use “Read next:” sections at the end

## Link back to hub:

- Every sub-article links back to hub page
- Use breadcrumb navigation
- Include “Part of: Complete Guide to Email Marketing” at top

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## Template 2: Converting Long-Form to FAQ Format

Use this when: Your content answers multiple questions

### Original Content Pattern:

Introduction (3 paragraphs)  
What is X (4 paragraphs)  
How X works (5 paragraphs)  
Benefits of X (3 paragraphs)  
When to use X (4 paragraphs)  
Conclusion (2 paragraphs)

### Restructured FAQ Format:

```
# [Topic]: Everything You Need to Know
## Quick Answer
[50-75 word direct answer to the main question]
## Detailed Answers
### What is [topic]?
[Direct answer in 50-100 words]
[Supporting details]
[Example]
### How does [topic] work?
[Direct answer in 50-100 words]
[Step-by-step breakdown]
[Example]
### What are the benefits of [topic]?
[Direct answer with bullet points]
- Benefit 1: [Specific outcome]
- Benefit 2: [Specific outcome]
- Benefit 3: [Specific outcome]
### When should you use [topic]?
```

```

[Direct answer]
[Use case 1]
[Use case 2]
[Use case 3]
### How much does [topic] cost?
[Direct, honest answer]
[Price ranges]
[Factors that affect cost]
### What are the alternatives to [topic]?
[List 3-5 alternatives]
[Brief comparison]
### How do you get started with [topic]?
[Step 1: Specific action]
[Step 2: Specific action]
[Step 3: Specific action]
## Related Questions
[Link to other related content]

```

Then add FAQ schema for all the question headings.

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## Template 3: Comparison Content Structure

Use this when: Comparing products, services, or methods

### Structure:

```

# [Option A] vs [Option B]: Which Should You Choose?
## Quick Comparison
[2-3 sentence summary of main differences]
## Side-by-Side Comparison
| Feature | Option A | Option B |
|-----|-----|-----|
| Best for | [Specific use case] | [Specific use case] |
| Price | $X/month | $Y/month |
| Key strength | [Specific benefit] | [Specific benefit] |
| Key limitation | [Specific drawback] | [Specific drawback] |
| Learning curve | [Easy/Medium/Hard] | [Easy/Medium/Hard] |
## When to Choose [Option A]
You should choose [Option A] if:
- You need [specific feature]
- Your budget is [range]
- You prioritize [specific benefit]
- Your team size is [range]
## When to Choose [Option B]
You should choose [Option B] if:

```

- You need [specific feature]
- Your budget is [range]
- You prioritize [specific benefit]
- Your use case is [specific scenario]

## Feature-by-Feature Comparison

### [Feature 1]

- **\*\*Option A:\*\*** [Description]
- **\*\*Option B:\*\*** [Description]
- **\*\*Winner:\*\*** [A/B/Tie] - [Why]

### [Feature 2]

- **\*\*Option A:\*\*** [Description]
- **\*\*Option B:\*\*** [Description]
- **\*\*Winner:\*\*** [A/B/Tie] - [Why]

## Real-World Examples

**\*\*Scenario 1:\*\*** [Type of user/company]

**\*\*Best choice:\*\*** [Option A/B]

**\*\*Why:\*\*** [Specific reason]

**\*\*Scenario 2:\*\*** [Type of user/company]

**\*\*Best choice:\*\*** [Option A/B]

**\*\*Why:\*\*** [Specific reason]

## Our Recommendation

[Balanced recommendation based on use case]

## Frequently Asked Questions

[FAQ schema with 5-7 common comparison questions]

**Critical:** Use HTML tables, not images, so AI can extract the comparison.

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#### Template 4: “Ultimate Guide” to “Quick Start” Conversion

Use this when: Creating an entry point for beginners

##### Structure:

# [Topic] Quick Start Guide: Get Results in [Timeframe]

## What You'll Accomplish

By the end of this guide, you'll have:

- [ ] [Specific outcome 1]
- [ ] [Specific outcome 2]
- [ ] [Specific outcome 3]

**\*\*Time required:\*\*** [Realistic estimate]

**\*\*Skill level:\*\*** Beginner

## Before You Start

You'll need:

- [Tool/resource 1]
- [Tool/resource 2]



```

- [Tool/resource 3]
## Step 1: [First Action]
**Time:** [Estimate]
### What to do:
[Specific instructions]
### Why it matters:
[Brief explanation]
### Common issues:
- **Problem:** [Issue]
  - **Solution:** [Fix]
## Step 2: [Second Action]
[Same structure as Step 1]
## Step 3: [Third Action]
[Same structure as Step 1]
## Step 4: [Fourth Action]
[Same structure as Step 1]
## Step 5: [Fifth Action]
[Same structure as Step 1]
## What to Do Next
You've now [accomplished outcome]. Your next steps:
1. **Immediate:** [Next action within 24 hours]
2. **This week:** [Action within 7 days]
3. **This month:** [Action within 30 days]
## Going Deeper
Ready to learn more?
- [Link to advanced guide]
- [Link to related topic]
- [Link to case studies]
## Frequently Asked Questions
[FAQ schema with beginner-focused questions]

```

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## 50 TEST QUERIES BY INDUSTRY

How to use this list:

1. Go to Google Search Labs and enable AI Mode
2. Search these exact queries
3. Screenshot who gets cited
4. Track in your spreadsheet (*Section 5*)
5. Analyze patterns in cited content

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## **SaaS & Software (10 queries)**

1. “best project management software for remote teams”
2. “how to choose CRM for small business”
3. “what is the difference between [your tool] and [competitor]”
4. “how much does [your category] software cost”
5. “best [your category] for startups under \$50/month”
6. “how to integrate [your tool] with Slack”
7. “what are the limitations of [your tool]”
8. “is [your tool] worth the money”
9. “alternatives to [major competitor] that are cheaper”
10. “how to migrate from [competitor] to [your tool]”

. . .

## **E-commerce & Retail (10 queries)**

1. “best [product category] for [specific use case]”
2. “how to choose [product type] for beginners”
3. “what is the difference between [product A] and [product B]”
4. “[product type] buying guide 2025”
5. “how much should I spend on [product category]”
6. “best budget [product type] under \$100”
7. “is [brand name] worth the extra cost”
8. “how long does [product] last”
9. “what are the common problems with [product]”
10. “where to buy [product] with best warranty”

. . .

## **B2B Services & Consulting (10 queries)**

1. “how to choose [service type] consultant”
2. “what does a [your profession] actually do”
3. “how much does [your service] cost”
4. “do I need [your service] or can I do it myself”
5. “what questions to ask when hiring [your profession]”
6. “how long does [your service] take”
7. “what are the signs I need [your service]”
8. “best [service type] for [industry] companies”
9. “what results can I expect from [your service]”
10. “[your service] vs [alternative approach]”

. . .

## **Healthcare & Wellness (10 queries)**

1. “what are the symptoms of [condition]”
2. “how to treat [condition] at home”
3. “when should I see a doctor for [symptom]”
4. “what is the difference between [treatment A] and [treatment B]”
5. “how long does [treatment] take to work”
6. “what are the side effects of [treatment]”
7. “natural alternatives to [treatment]”
8. “how to prevent [condition]”
9. “what causes [condition]”

10. “is [treatment] covered by insurance”

. . .

## **Finance & Legal (10 queries)**

1. “how to choose [financial product] for [situation]”
2. “what is the difference between [option A] and [option B]”
3. “when do I need [professional service]”
4. “how much does [service] cost”
5. “can I [do legal/financial task] myself”
6. “what are the tax implications of [action]”
7. “how long does [process] take”
8. “what documents do I need for [process]”
9. “common mistakes when [doing financial/legal task]”
10. “is [product/service] worth it for [situation]”

. . .

## **BONUS: Universal Query Patterns to Test**

These work across all industries — customize with your specifics:

1. “how does [your solution] work”
2. “who should use [your product/service]”
3. “what are the benefits of [your approach]”
4. “how to get started with [your topic]”
5. “[your topic] for beginners”
6. “best practices for [your topic]”
7. “common mistakes in [your field]”

8. “how to measure success with [your solution]”
9. “what to look for when choosing [your category]”
10. “case study: [your topic] results”

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## CITATION TRACKING SPREADSHEET

### Sheet 1: Query Testing Log

Copy this template to Google Sheets or Excel:

Date Query AI Platform Your Brand Cited?

```
<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>Date</th>
      <th>Query</th>
      <th>AI Platform</th>
      <th>Your Brand Cited?</th>
      <th>Position</th>
      <th>Competitors Cited</th>
      <th>Content Structure Notes</th>
      <th>Action Items</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody>
    <tr>
      <td>2025-10-14</td>
      <td>best project management for remote teams</td>
      <td>Google AI Mode</td>
      <td>No</td>
      <td>N/A</td>
      <td>Competitor A, Competitor B, Reddit thread</td>
      <td>They use comparison tables and FAQ schema</td>
      <td>Add comparison table to our page</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td>2025-10-14</td>
      <td>how to choose CRM for small business</td>
      <td>ChatGPT</td>
      <td>Yes</td>
      <td>3rd mention</td>
      <td>Competitor C, Us, Generic guide</td>
```

```

        <td>Cited from our FAQ section</td>
        <td>Good – maintain this format</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td>2025-10-14</td>
        <td>alternatives to [competitor]</td>
        <td>Perplexity</td>
        <td>No</td>
        <td>N/A</td>
        <td>Reddit, Blog X, Blog Y</td>
        <td>Reddit thread has specific user experiences</td>
        <td>Create authentic comparison with limitations</td>
    </tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```

## Columns explained:

- **Date:** When you ran the test
- **Query:** Exact search query used
- **AI Platform:** Google AI Mode, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude
- **Your Brand Cited:** Yes/No
- **Position:** If cited, were you 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.
- **Competitors Cited:** Who else got mentioned
- **Content Structure Notes:** What patterns you noticed in cited content
- **Action Items:** What you'll change based on this test

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## Sheet 2: Weekly Citation Rate

```

<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>Week Starting</th>
      <th>Queries Tested</th>
      <th>Times Cited</th>

```

```

<th>Citation Rate %</th>
<th>Avg Position</th>
<th>Top Performing Content Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2025-10-07</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>FAQ-based articles</td>
<td>Baseline week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025-10-14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Added schema to 5 pages</td>
<td>Schema helped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025-10-21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Restructured content</td>
<td>Major improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```

## How to calculate Citation Rate:

$$\text{Citation Rate} = (\text{Times Cited} / \text{Queries Tested}) \times 100$$

## What you're tracking:

- Is your citation rate increasing over time?

- Which content changes correlate with improved citations?
- Which platforms cite you most often?

. . .

## Sheet 3: Content Performance Tracker

Use this to:

```
<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>URL</th>
      <th>Content Type</th>
      <th>Published Date</th>
      <th>Last Updated</th>
      <th>Citation Count (This Month)</th>
      <th>Schema Implemented</th>
      <th>Video Added</th>
      <th>Word Count</th>
      <th>Primary Keyword</th>
      <th>Notes</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody>
    <tr>
      <td>/guide/email-marketing</td>
      <td>Guide</td>
      <td>2024-03-15</td>
      <td>2025-10-14</td>
      <td>8</td>
      <td>FAQ, Article</td>
      <td>Yes</td>
      <td>1,200</td>
      <td>email marketing automation</td>
      <td>Strong performer</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td>/blog/crm-comparison</td>
      <td>Comparison</td>
      <td>2025-09-01</td>
      <td>2025-10-01</td>
      <td>12</td>
      <td>FAQ, Product</td>
      <td>No</td>
      <td>1,500</td>
      <td>best crm software</td>
```



```

        <td>Top performer – video needed</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td>/resources/quick-start</td>
        <td>Quick Start</td>
        <td>2025-10-10</td>
        <td>2025-10-10</td>
        <td>2</td>
        <td>HowTo</td>
        <td>Yes</td>
        <td>900</td>
        <td>crm setup guide</td>
        <td>New content – monitor</td>
    </tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```

- Identify which content gets cited most
- Track what changes improve citations
- Plan your content refresh schedule
- Prioritize which pages to optimize next

• • •

## Sheet 4: Competitor Citation Analysis

Use this to:

```

<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>Competitor</th>
      <th>Total Citations Observed</th>
      <th>Common Query Types</th>
      <th>Content Patterns</th>
      <th>Schema Usage</th>
      <th>Multi-Modal</th>
      <th>Key Advantages</th>
      <th>How to Compete</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody>
    <tr>

```

```

<td>Competitor A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Product comparisons</td>
<td>Detailed tables, honest limitations</td>
<td>FAQ, Product</td>
<td>Video + transcript</td>
<td>Very transparent, admits drawbacks</td>
<td>Add limitations section to our comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitor B</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>How-to guides</td>
<td>Step-by-step with screenshots</td>
<td>HowTo, Video</td>
<td>Screenshots only</td>
<td>Great visual documentation</td>
<td>Add video walkthroughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddit (generic)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>All types</td>
<td>Real user experiences, specific details</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Text only</td>
<td>Authentic voice, specific numbers</td>
<td>Write more conversationally, add specific examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```

- Understand why competitors get cited
- Identify content gaps you can fill
- Learn what formats work in your industry
- Develop differentiation strategy

• • •

## Sheet 5: Monthly Progress Dashboard

Key Metrics to Track:

```

<table>
  <thead>
    <tr>
      <th>Metric</th>
      <th>Baseline (Week 1)</th>
      <th>Current</th>
      <th>Change</th>
      <th>Goal</th>
      <th>On Track?</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody>
    <tr>
      <td>Overall Citation Rate</td>
      <td>10%</td>
      <td>35%</td>
      <td>+25%</td>
      <td>40%</td>
      <td>Yes ✓</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td>Avg Citation Position</td>
      <td>3.2</td>
      <td>1.8</td>
      <td>-1.4</td>
      <td>1.5</td>
      <td>Yes ✓</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td>Pages with Schema</td>
      <td>3</td>
      <td>15</td>
      <td>+12</td>
      <td>20</td>
      <td>Yes ✓</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td>Pages with Video</td>
      <td>0</td>
      <td>5</td>
      <td>+5</td>
      <td>10</td>
      <td>On track</td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td>Content Pieces Published (Month)</td>
      <td>2</td>
      <td>10</td>
      <td>+8</td>
      <td>12</td>
      <td>On track</td>
    </tr>
  </tbody>
</table>

```

```

<tr>
  <td>Direct/Branded Traffic (% increase)</td>
  <td>0%</td>
  <td>+18%</td>
  <td>+18%</td>
  <td>+25%</td>
  <td>On track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```

## Additional Metrics:

Platform Citation Rate Notes Google AI Mode 38% Best performer ChatGPT 25%  
 Good for how-to queries Perplexity 42% Excellent for technical content Claude 30%  
 Strong for detailed explanations

. . .

## Sheet 6: Action Priority Matrix

Page URL	Current Citation Rate	Quick Wins Available	Priority Score	Actions Needed
/product-page	5%	Add FAQ schema, comparison table	High (8/10)	1. Add schema 2. Create HTML table 3. Add video 3 hours
/blog/guide	15%	Update content, add video	Medium (6/10)	1. Add recent stats 2. Record video 3. Update date 4 hours
/resources/tool	2%	Complete restructure needed	Medium (5/10)	1. Break into 3 articles 2. Add schema to all 8 hours
/this-month				

## Priority Score Calculation:

**Priority Score** = (Potential Impact × Ease of Implementation) / 10

Potential Impact: 1-10 (10 = high traffic page with low citation rate)  
 Ease of Implementation: 1-10 (10 = quick fixes available)

. . .

# IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

## Phase 1: Foundation (Week 1)

### Day 1–2: Assessment

- ☐ Enable Google AI Mode in Search Labs
- ☐ Test 10 queries from your industry list
- ☐ Screenshot all results
- ☐ Fill in Citation Tracking Spreadsheet (Sheet 1)
- ☐ Identify your top 5 pages to optimize

### Day 3–4: Quick Schema Wins

- ☐ Add FAQ schema to top 3 pages
- ☐ Add Article schema to all blog posts
- ☐ Test all schema with Rich Results Test
- ☐ Fix any errors or warnings
- ☐ Document baseline citation rate

### Day 5–7: Content Analysis

- ☐ Analyze competitors getting cited
- ☐ Document their content patterns
- ☐ Identify 3 pieces of content to restructure
- ☐ Create restructure plan for each
- ☐ Set up weekly content refresh schedule

. . .

## Phase 2: Optimization (Week 2–3)

### Content Restructuring

- ☐ Pick longest guide (3,000+ words)
- ☐ Break into 4–6 focused sub-articles
- ☐ Create hub page linking to all pieces
- ☐ Add FAQ schema to each new piece
- ☐ Implement internal linking strategy
- ☐ Test queries related to this content
- ☐ Measure citation rate change

### **Schema Expansion**

- ☐ Add HowTo schema to tutorial content
- ☐ Add Product schema to product pages
- ☐ Add Organization schema to homepage
- ☐ Add Person schema to author pages (if applicable)
- ☐ Test all new schema implementations

. . .

### **Phase 3: Multi-Modal (Week 4–5)**

#### **Video Content Creation**

- ☐ Identify top 3 pages by traffic
- ☐ Record 3–5 minute video for each
- ☐ Create full transcripts
- ☐ Add VideoObject schema
- ☐ Embed videos in articles
- ☐ Test video-related queries
- ☐ Measure impact on citations

## Visual Content Enhancement

- [ ] Update alt text on all images (conversational sentences)
- [ ] Convert comparison tables to HTML (not images)
- [ ] Add diagrams to complex explanations
- [ ] Ensure all visuals have descriptive captions

• • •

## Phase 4: Publishing Rhythm (Week 6+)

### Content Calendar Setup

- [ ] Plan 2–3 articles per week
- [ ] Focus on 800–1,200 words each
- [ ] Each answers one specific question
- [ ] Create editorial calendar template
- [ ] Set up Google Alerts for industry news

### Content Refresh System

- [ ] Every Monday: Update one article
- [ ] Add “Last Updated” date prominently
- [ ] Add new section with recent information
- [ ] Update Article schema dateModified
- [ ] Add 1–2 new FAQ questions
- [ ] Re-test related queries

• • •

## Phase 5: Distribution (Ongoing)

### Platform Expansion

- ☐ Join 3–5 relevant subreddits
- ☐ Participate authentically (answer questions)
- ☐ Share insights on LinkedIn (2–3x/week)
- ☐ Create Twitter threads from best content
- ☐ Repurpose content for Medium or DEV.to

## **Community Engagement**

- ☐ Answer questions on Stack Overflow (if technical)
- ☐ Contribute to open-source documentation (if applicable)
- ☐ Comment thoughtfully on industry blogs
- ☐ Share others' content with insights added
- ☐ Build genuine relationships (not just promotion)

• • •

## **Weekly Monitoring Routine**

### **Every Monday Morning (30 minutes):**

- ☐ Test 10 queries from your list
- ☐ Update Citation Tracking Spreadsheet
- ☐ Calculate weekly citation rate
- ☐ Identify top performing content
- ☐ Update one old article with fresh content
- ☐ Plan week's publishing schedule

### **Every Friday Afternoon (20 minutes):**

- ☐ Review week's published content
- ☐ Check Rich Results Test for any errors



- ☐ Look for trending topics to cover next week
- ☐ Update Progress Dashboard
- ☐ Celebrate wins / analyze what didn't work

• • •

## **Monthly Review (60 minutes)**

### **First Monday of Each Month:**

- ☐ Calculate monthly citation rate change
- ☐ Review competitor citation analysis
- ☐ Identify content gaps competitors are filling
- ☐ Plan next month's content topics
- ☐ Adjust strategy based on what's working
- ☐ Update Progress Dashboard with monthly metrics
- ☐ Set goals for next month

• • •

## **TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE**

### **Problem: Not getting cited at all**

#### **Diagnostic questions:**

- Does your content answer questions directly in first 100 words?
- Do you have FAQ schema implemented?
- Is your content structured with clear H2/H3 headings?
- Are you targeting questions people actually ask?

#### **Solutions:**

1. Test your target queries manually — what type of content IS getting cited?

2. Add FAQ schema to your top 5 pages immediately
3. Restructure one article to answer the question in paragraph 1
4. Test again in 7 days

. . .

## **Problem: Getting cited but at position 3–5**

### **Diagnostic questions:**

- Do competitors have video when you only have text?
- Are competitors more transparent about limitations?
- Do competitors use comparison tables (HTML)?
- Is your content more recent than competitors’?

### **Solutions:**

1. Add video + transcript to outrank text-only competitors
2. Add “*limitations*” or “*when NOT to use*” section
3. Convert any comparison data to HTML tables
4. Update your content with recent information
5. Add more specific details (numbers, timeframes)

. . .

## **Problem: Citation rate dropped suddenly**

### **Diagnostic questions:**

- Did you check if competitors published new content?
- Has your content not been updated in 30+ days?
- Did competitors add schema when you haven’t?

## Solutions:

1. Update your content immediately (add new section)
2. Update dateModified in your schema
3. Analyze what changed in competitor content
4. Increase publishing frequency to 3x/week
5. Add any schema types you're missing

. . .

## Problem: Citations don't drive traffic

This is normal. AEO is about brand awareness, not direct traffic.

### What to track instead:

- Branded search volume (*people searching your company name*)
- Direct traffic increases
- Time between first citation and conversion
- Brand mention increases across web

### If branded searches aren't increasing:

- Ensure your brand name appears in cited content
- Add your brand to FAQ answers naturally
- Include “*About [Your Brand]*” section
- Get cited more consistently (more content)

. . .

## ADVANCED TACTICS

### 1. The “First Comprehensive Source” Strategy

**Goal:** Be first to comprehensively cover breaking news in your industry

**How:**

1. Set up Google Alerts for major industry terms
2. When alert triggers, immediately publish 500–800 word analysis
3. Structure: *What happened* → *What it means* → *What to do*
4. Publish within 6 hours of news breaking
5. You'll own citations for 2–3 weeks

**Example timing:**

- 9:00 AM: News breaks
- 9:30 AM: Start writing
- 11:00 AM: Publish
- 11:00 AM — 3:00 PM: Peak citation window begins

. . .

## **2. The “Reddit Amplification” Strategy**

**Goal:** Get your content cited by appearing in Reddit discussions

**How:**

1. Find 3–5 active subreddits in your industry
2. Participate authentically for 2 weeks (no promotion)
3. When someone asks a question your content answers:
  - Answer the question helpfully in your comment
  - Add specific details from your experience
  - Link to your content as “I wrote more about this here: [Google AI Mode 2025: How Query Fan-Out Changed Search](#)”

1. Write conversationally (like you're helping a friend)
2. Admit limitations and alternatives

**Reddit content is cited heavily by AI systems.** This gets you “double citation” potential.

. . .

### 3. The “Schema Stacking” Strategy

**Goal:** Maximize extraction opportunities by combining schema types

**How:** Combine multiple schema types on one page:

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@graph": [
    {
      "@type": "Article",
      [Article schema here]
    },
    {
      "@type": "FAQPage",
      [FAQ schema here]
    },
    {
      "@type": "VideoObject",
      [Video schema here]
    },
    {
      "@type": "HowTo",
      [HowTo schema here]
    }
  ]
}
</script>
```

**Testing shows pages with 3+ schema types get cited ~40% more often.**

. . .

## 4. The “Update Cascade” Strategy

**Goal:** Trigger re-evaluation of multiple pages simultaneously

**How:**

1. Every Monday, update your top 5 pages
2. Add one new paragraph to each
3. Update dateModified in schema
4. Update “*Last Updated: [Date]*” at top of page
5. This triggers fresh content signal across multiple pages

**Why it works:** AI systems re-crawl and re-evaluate updated content. Updating multiple pages creates multiple chances for citation.

. . .

## FINAL CHECKLIST: Are You Ready?

Before you consider your AEO implementation complete, verify:

### Schema Implementation:

- ☐ FAQ schema on at least 10 pages
- ☐ Article schema on all blog posts
- ☐ VideoObject schema on pages with video
- ☐ All schema tested with zero errors
- ☐ Schema includes brand/product mentions naturally

### Content Structure:

- ☐ Top 10 pages answer main question in first 100 words
- ☐ All comparison data in HTML tables (not images)
- ☐ Clear H2/H3 headings that match questions people ask

- ☐ At least 3 long guides broken into focused sub-articles
- ☐ Internal linking connects related content

### **Multi-Modal Content:**

- ☐ At least 5 videos with full transcripts
- ☐ All images have descriptive alt text (full sentences)
- ☐ Video embedded in highest-traffic articles
- ☐ VideoObject schema implemented correctly

### **Publishing System:**

- ☐ Calendar set for 2–3 articles per week
- ☐ Google Alerts configured for industry news
- ☐ Weekly Monday reminder to update one article
- ☐ Editorial calendar template created
- ☐ 48-hour content sprint process documented

### **Tracking & Measurement:**

- ☐ Citation Tracking Spreadsheet set up
- ☐ Tested 50 queries and documented results
- ☐ Baseline citation rate calculated
- ☐ Competitor analysis completed
- ☐ Weekly monitoring routine scheduled

### **Distribution:**

- ☐ Active in 3–5 relevant subreddits
- ☐ LinkedIn posting 2–3x per week
- ☐ Cross-posting content to Medium or DEV.to

- [ ] Engaged with community authentically (not just promoting)

• • •

## **WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE**

**After 30 days:**

- Citation rate increases from <10% to 25–35%
- Branded search volume increases 15–25%
- You appear in AI results for 3–5 target queries
- Direct traffic increases 10–20%

**After 90 days:**

- Citation rate stabilizes around 35–50%
- You're cited consistently for your top 10 queries
- Branded search volume increases 30–50%
- Revenue/conversions increase despite potential traffic decrease
- You've established "citation authority" in your niche

**After 6 months:**

- You're a default citation source for your category
- Competitors studying YOUR content structure
- Citation rate maintains 40–60%
- Business outcomes (leads, sales, inquiries) increase 25–40%
- You've adapted to being citation-first, not traffic-first

• • •

## **QUESTIONS? STUCK? NEED HELP?**



## Common reasons implementations fail:

1. **Trying to do everything at once** → Pick ONE thing this week
2. **Perfect is the enemy of done** → Ship 80% complete content
3. **Not testing frequently enough** → Test 10 queries every Monday
4. **Optimizing but not publishing** → Publishing frequency matters more than perfection
5. **Giving up too soon** → Takes 4–6 weeks to see meaningful results

## If you're stuck on:

- **Schema implementation:** Start with FAQ schema only. It's the highest ROI.
- **Content restructure:** Just break ONE guide into 3 pieces. See what happens.
- **Video creation:** Use your phone. Record 3 minutes. Add transcript. Done.
- **Publishing frequency:** 2 articles per week is plenty. Don't aim for daily.

. . .

**Remember:** The goal isn't perfection. The goal is to show up in AI answers when people ask about your topic. Every small improvement compounds.

Start with one thing this week. Test it. Measure it. Adjust. Then do one more thing next week. That's how you win at the AEO Game.

**Last updated:** October 14, 2025 **Version:** 1.0

. . .

*This starter kit is designed to be practical and actionable. Don't read it all at once. Reference it as you implement. Come back to it weekly. Update your tracking spreadsheet religiously. The data will tell you what's working.*

*Good luck. You've got this*

**About the author:** As CTO of a Berlin-based MedTech startup, I lead a talented team of computer vision and data engineers building next-generation mobile and web applications for healthcare.

My work is driven by a deep fascination with where AI and agentic coding are heading. Over the past decade, I've also explored the intersection of search algorithms, information retrieval, and content strategy — understanding how technology shapes the way we find and interpret knowledge.

I publish what I learn because this technology moves too fast for anyone to figure out alone. Connect with me here on Medium ([Reza Rezvani](#)), or on [Twitter](#).

You can also connect with me at [alirezarezvani.com](https://alirezarezvani.com) for more insights on AI-powered development, architectural patterns, and the future of software engineering.

Looking forward to connecting and seeing your contributions — check out my [open source projects on GitHub](#)!

✨ Thanks for reading! If you'd like more practical insights on AI and tech, hit **subscribe** to stay updated.

I'd also love to hear your thoughts — drop a comment with your ideas, questions, or even the kind of topics you'd enjoy seeing here next. Your input really helps shape the direction of this channel.

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