



SEO IN THE AGE OF AI:

HOW SMALL BUSINESSES

STAY VISIBLE

IN GOOGLE & CHATGPT



THE RULES OF SEARCH HAVE **CHANGED**

For more than 20 years, SEO has been the primary way businesses get discovered online.

Since the early 2000s, the strategy was straightforward:

- ✦ Choose the right keywords.
- ✦ Optimize your website.
- ✦ Try to rank on the first page of Google.

And for a long time, that worked.

But in late 2022, something shifted.

With the public release of ChatGPT* and the rapid integration of AI into search results, the way people research, compare, and make decisions began to change.

People aren't just typing short keywords anymore.

They're asking full questions:

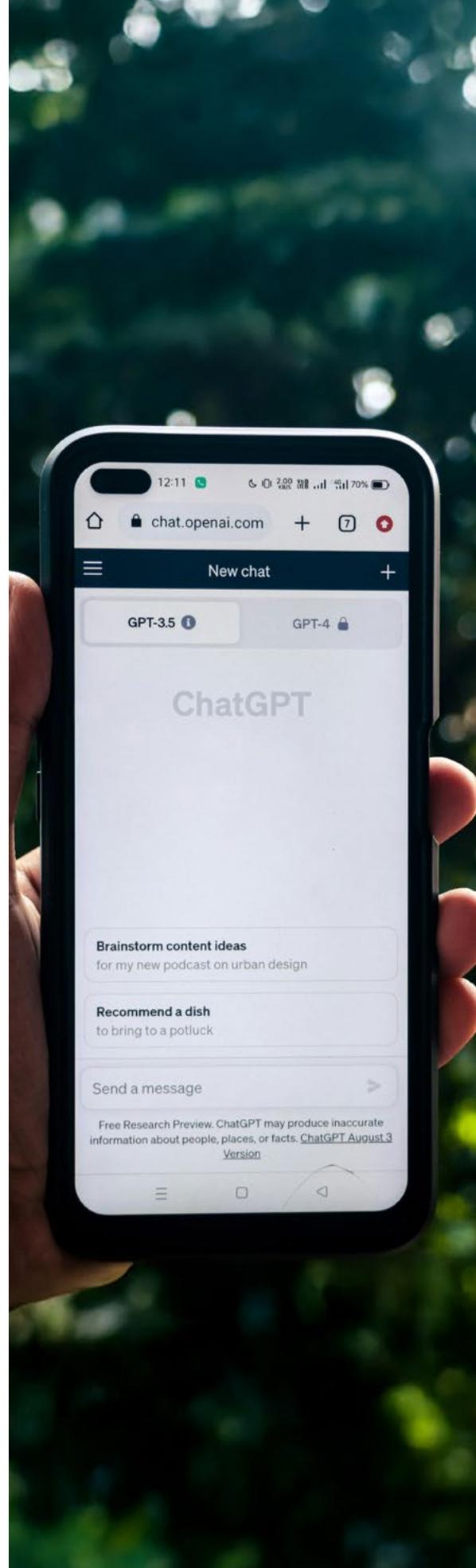
- ✦ *"Is it worth hiring a marketing agency for a small business?"*
- ✦ *"How much does it cost to remodel a kitchen in 2026?"*
- ✦ *"What's the best CRM for a growing service company?"*
- ✦ *"Should I hire in-house or outsource?"*

Instead of clicking through 10 different websites, they're getting summarized answers. They're comparing options inside AI tools. They're refining decisions before ever reaching out.

And increasingly, buyers are using both traditional search engines and AI tools during the same decision process.

Discovery is starting to split.

*While ChatGPT is referenced here as a common example, these principles apply broadly to AI-powered search tools and large language models (LLMs).



Some buyers still click through Google results.
Others start by asking ChatGPT.
Many move back and forth between the two.

This matters more than most business owners realize.

When someone reaches out after researching across search engines and AI tools, they're often further along in their decision process. They've already compared options. They've already educated themselves. They've already narrowed their choices.

That means conversations can move faster.
Close rates can improve.
Marketing ROI can increase.

But *only* if your business is visible in both environments.

Search hasn't disappeared. It's expanded.

And the businesses that understand this shift early will have a real advantage.

Because this is a different game, it has different rules.

The good news?

You don't need to become an SEO expert.
You don't need to master artificial intelligence.
You don't need to chase every new trend.

But you do need to understand:

- ✦ How AI tools decide what to summarize
- ✦ How modern search behavior works
- ✦ How to structure your content so you remain visible
- ✦ How to use AI as a tool without losing your voice

That's what this workbook will help you do.

Because today, visibility isn't about gaming algorithms. It's about clarity, credibility, and consistency in a world where search is evolving.

And small businesses that adapt now won't just keep up. They'll compete smarter.

Let's get started.



PART 1

CLARITY COMES FIRST

Before you think about SEO tactics or AI prompts, you need clarity.

Search engines and AI tools try to understand who you serve and what problem you solve. If your messaging is broad or generic, it is harder for them to categorize your business.

Specific businesses are easier to understand.

Easier to match to a search query.

And easier to surface in Google and ChatGPT.

The goal of this section is simple: Get clear.

Worksheet 1: Positioning Clarity

1 Who do you serve? Be specific.

The clearer you are, the easier it is to be found.

Industry

Example: Residential interior design

Your answer: _____

Revenue range

Example: \$500K–\$2M annually

Your answer: _____

Business stage

Example: Established, growing through referrals

Your answer: _____

Geographic focus (if relevant)

Example: Chicago metro area

Your answer: _____

Ideal Client Persona

Describe a typical client or customer.

Example: Emily is a 38-year-old homeowner who just purchased a new house. She wants professional design help but feels overwhelmed by options. She values quality and is willing to invest, but she needs guidance and reassurance before committing.

Your Ideal Client Persona:

2 What urgent problem makes them start searching online?

Think about the moment that triggers a search.

Examples:

“We just bought a house and have no idea where to start with interior design.”

“Our HVAC system stopped working, and we need help immediately.”

“I need a website for my small business, but I do not know what it should cost.”

“Our online store traffic has dropped, and sales are slowing.”

Your answer:

3 Complete this sentence.

This forces clarity and specificity.

Example 1:

We help busy homeowners transform newly purchased houses into cohesive, livable spaces.

Example 2:

We help growing e-commerce brands increase online sales through strategic website optimization.

Now write yours:

We help _____ who are struggling with _____
 _____ so they can _____

4 What question might someone ask ChatGPT before hiring someone like you?

When people use tools like Google or ChatGPT, they usually start with a question about a problem they’re trying to solve.

They likely aren’t searching for your business name yet.

They’re generally asking things like:

How much does <<the product or service>> cost?

Is <<this product or service>> worth it?

What are my <<product or service>> options?

How would <<a product or service>> fix this problem?

Thinking about these questions helps you identify the topics your audience is researching before they choose a provider.

Write one question someone might ask when they're trying to solve the problem your business addresses.

Write this as a full question, just like someone might type into Google or ChatGPT. When in doubt, ask ChatGPT what common questions are around your product or service.

Examples:

"How much does interior design cost for a 3,000 square foot home?"

"What is the average cost to replace an HVAC system?"

"How do I increase sales on my Shopify store?"

"Is hiring a business coach worth it for a small company?"

Your version:

5 Rewrite your homepage headline to be more specific.

Many small business websites say things like:

"We Deliver Quality Service."

"Your Trusted Partner."

"Solutions for Growing Businesses."

"Full-Service Marketing Agency."

These are clear but not specific.

Example improvements:

Instead of:

"Full-Service Marketing Agency"

Try:

"Digital Marketing for Local Home Service Businesses"

Instead of:

"Business Coaching Services"

Try:

"Business Coaching for Service-Based Entrepreneurs Ready to Scale"

Now rewrite yours.

Current headline:

Improved, more specific version:

Reflection

After completing this section, ask yourself:

1. Is it obvious who we serve?
2. Is it obvious what problem we solve?
3. Would a first-time visitor understand what we do within 10 seconds?

If the answer is 'not yet', that's your first opportunity.

Clarity is the foundation of modern visibility.

PART 2

THE RIGHT QUESTIONS DRIVE THE RIGHT CLIENTS

Not all traffic leads to revenue.

Many small businesses create content that attracts readers but not buyers.

The content that drives inquiries usually answers:

- ✦ Pricing questions
- ✦ Comparison questions
- ✦ “Is it worth it?” questions
- ✦ Timing questions
- ✦ Risk or concern questions

When you clearly answer real buyer questions, you increase your chances of showing up in Google and AI tools. More importantly, you attract people who are closer to making a decision.

Worksheet 2: Question Mining + AI Prompt Lab

Step 1 List 10 real questions prospects ask before hiring you.

Think about sales calls, email inquiries, DMs, and consultations.

Examples:

“How much does it cost?”

4. _____

“How long does the process take?”

5. _____

“What makes you different from competitors?”

6. _____

“What happens if it does not work?”

7. _____

“Can you show me examples of past results?”

Now write your own:

1. _____

8. _____

2. _____

9. _____

3. _____

10. _____

Step 2 Use AI to Expand Your List**Open ChatGPT and try prompts like:**

“What questions do homeowners ask before hiring a remodeling contractor?”

“What concerns do small business owners have before investing in digital marketing?”

“What should someone compare before choosing a financial advisor?”

“What objections do people have before hiring a business coach?”

Write down recurring themes you notice:

Now ask yourself:

Do these match what real customers ask me?

If not, adjust.

AI is a starting point. Your real conversations are the filter.

Step 3 Choose 3 High-Intent Topics to Create First

Focus on questions tied to decision-making.

Examples:

“How much does a kitchen remodel cost in Dallas?”

“Is professional SEO worth it for a local business?”

“How long does it take to see results from paid ads?”

Now choose yours:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

These become your next three pieces of content.

PART 3

STRUCTURE CONTENT SO AI CAN UNDERSTAND IT

AI tools scan for structure.

They prioritize content that is:

- ✦ Easy to read
- ✦ Clearly organized
- ✦ Directly answering a question
- ✦ Free of fluff

This benefits both AI tools and real humans.

Why Headings Matter More Than Ever

Search engines and AI tools rely on structure to understand your content.

They do not just read paragraphs from top to bottom.

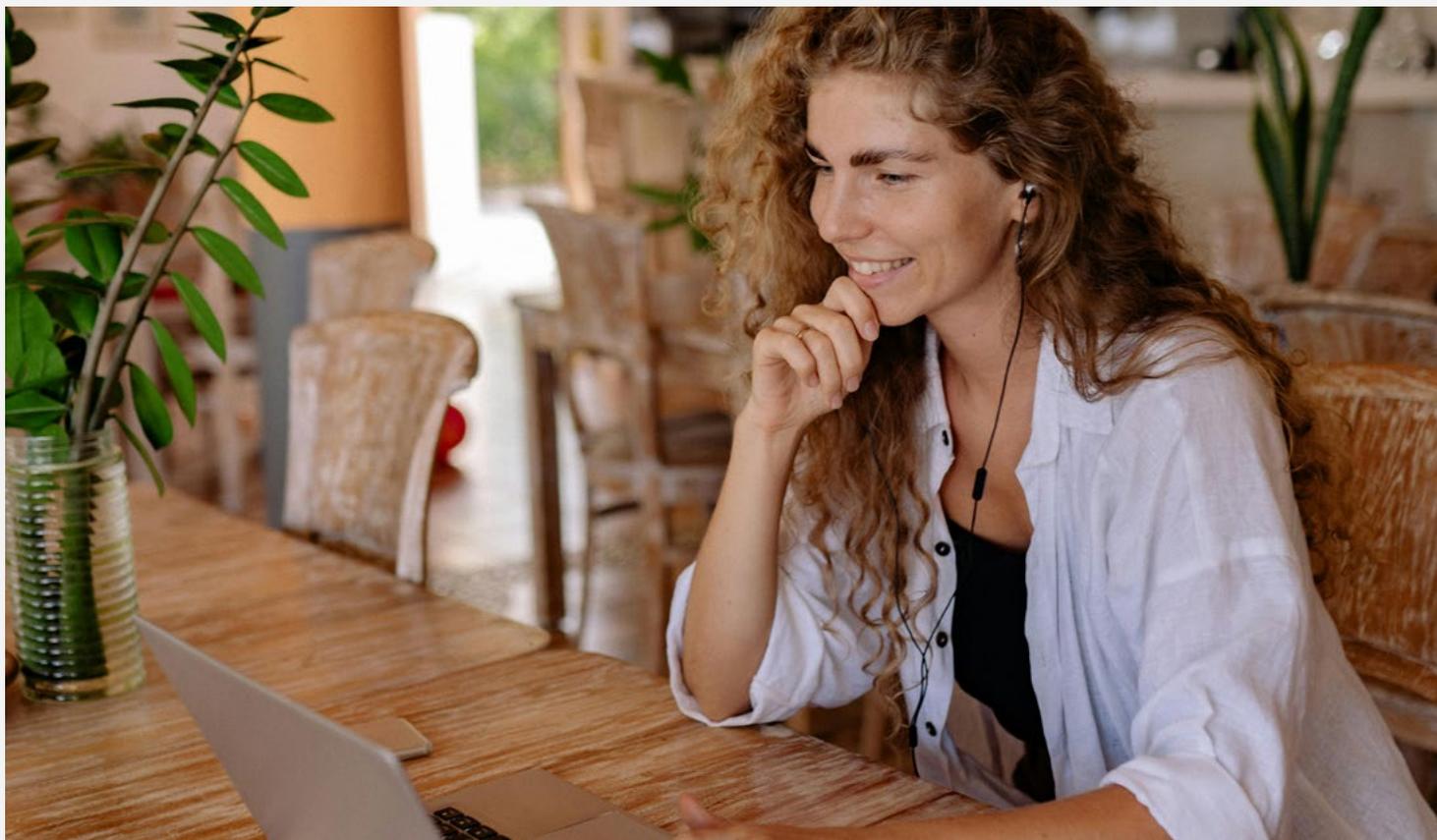
They scan for:

- ✦ Clear section titles
- ✦ Logical hierarchy
- ✦ Direct answers under those headings

Your headings act like an outline of your page.

When they're structured properly, it's easier for:

- ✦ Google to rank your content
- ✦ AI tools to summarize your content
- ✦ Readers to quickly understand your content



The Simple Structure Rule

Think of your page like a book outline.

How Much Does Kitchen Remodeling Cost in 2026?

What Affects Kitchen Remodeling Costs?

Materials



Labor



Location



Timeline



H1 = The Main Topic (Only One Per Page)

Your H1 is the main title of the page.

Example:

H1: How Much Does Kitchen Remodeling Cost in 2026?

You should only have one H1 per page.

H2 = Major Sections

H2s break the page into key sections.

Example:

H2: What Affects Kitchen Remodeling Costs?

H2: Average Price Ranges by Project Size

H2: Is Financing Available?

H2: Is a Kitchen Remodel Worth It?

These are often written as real questions.

Why: Search engines and AI tools often surface content that directly answers real questions. Writing them this way helps you highlight topics your audience is already searching for.

H3 = Supporting Details

H3s live underneath H2s and add clarity.

Example:

H2: What Affects Kitchen Remodeling Costs?

H3: Materials

H3: Labor

H3: Location

H3: Timeline

This structure helps AI tools understand relationships between ideas.

Why This Matters for AI

When someone asks:

“How much does kitchen remodeling cost?”

AI tools look for:

- ✦ A page clearly focused on that topic
- ✦ A strong main heading
- ✦ Clear subheadings
- ✦ Direct answers immediately under those headings

If your structure is vague, your visibility is weaker.

If your structure mirrors real questions, your content is easier to surface.

Worksheet 3: Header Hierarchy Check

Choose one important page on your website.

Write the current H1:

Does it clearly match what someone would search?

Yes

No

List three current H2s:

1.

2.

3.

Now rewrite them as clearer, question-based H2s:

1.

2.

3.

Do your H3s logically support your H2s?

Yes

Needs improvement

Weak vs. Strong Headers

Weak:

“Our Services”

Strong

“How Much Does Lawn Care Cost Per Month?”

Weak:

“Why Choose Us”

Strong

“Is Professional Web Design Worth the Investment?”

Simple Rule for Better Headings

If a real person wouldn't type it into Google or ask it in ChatGPT, it probably shouldn't be your heading.

Worksheet 4: Improve One Existing Page

Choose one blog post or service page on your website.

Review it honestly.

Rewrite 3 headers as specific questions

Add a direct answer in the first 2–3 sentences

Add 3 FAQs at the bottom

Break up long paragraphs

Add internal links to related pages

Which page are you updating?

What is the first change you will make?



PART 4

SHOW THAT YOU ARE TRUSTWORTHY

AI tools look for signals of credibility.

People do, too.

If your website does not clearly show proof of experience, it is harder for search engines and AI tools to understand why you should be surfaced.

Examples of trust signals:

- ✦ Years in business
- ✦ Client testimonials
- ✦ Certifications or licenses
- ✦ Specific industries served
- ✦ Before-and-after examples
- ✦ Awards or media mentions
- ✦ Case studies

Worksheet 5: Authority Audit

Review your website right now.

Do you clearly show:

How long you've been in business

Testimonials with names or businesses

Who you specifically serve

Certifications, licenses, or credentials

Real client results or examples

Photos of real work or real people

What's missing?

What can you realistically improve in the next 30 days?

PART 5

USE AI AS A SMART ASSISTANT

AI is a tool. It is not your strategy.

It can help you:

- ✦ Brainstorm blog topics
- ✦ Turn bullet points into paragraphs
- ✦ Rephrase unclear sentences
- ✦ Create rough outlines
- ✦ Generate FAQ ideas

It cannot replace your experience or insight.

Publishing unedited AI content often sounds generic. It can also reduce trust.

Worksheet 6: Define Your Voice Before Using AI

Choose a paragraph from your website.

Paste it into ChatGPT and ask:

“Describe the tone and voice of this brand.”

AI might say something like:

- ✦ Professional
- ✦ Educational
- ✦ Friendly
- ✦ Direct

Now define your voice in your own words.

We are:

We are not:

Use this checklist to ensure AI-generated content reflects your expertise and doesn't become generic “AI slop.”

- Edit every draft
- Fact-check all information
- Add real examples
- Make it sound like you (*your brand, your voice*)

CREATE A SIMPLE CUSTOM GPT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

You already did the hardest work in Part 1.

Now you can use that clarity to make AI more useful. With a paid account, you can create a custom GPT.

And custom GPTs work best when they understand:

- ✦ Who you serve
- ✦ Your tone
- ✦ What problem you solve
- ✦ Your positioning

Without that context, it produces generic content.

With that context, it becomes a practical assistant.

Step 1 Pull Information From [Part 1](#)

Before building your GPT, gather:

Your Ideal Client Persona

Your “We help…” statement

The urgent problem that triggers searches

Your refined homepage headline

A short description of your services

You will use this information in your setup instructions.

Step 2 Create Your GPT Instructions

Start with something like this:

You are a content assistant for my small business.

We help [insert your “We help…” statement from Part 1].

Our ideal client is [summarize your Ideal Client Persona].

They often search for help when [describe urgent problem].

Our services include [list services clearly].

Our tone is [describe your voice].

We prioritize clear, direct answers and practical examples.

Avoid generic marketing language.

Now customize it with your own language:

Step 3 Test It With High-Intent Topics

Use one of the three high-intent topics you selected in [Part 2](#).

Ask:

“Outline a blog post about [your chosen topic].”

“List 10 FAQs related to this topic.”

“Write a 3-sentence direct answer to this question.”

Then refine the GPT instructions if the output feels too broad.

Important Reminder

AI becomes more powerful when it reflects your clarity.

If your positioning is vague, your output will be vague. If your positioning is specific, your content will be stronger.

Ask yourself:

Does this clearly reflect who we serve?

Does it answer a real question our customers ask?

Did we add examples or insights from our experience?

Does the tone sound like our brand?

The quality of your input determines the quality of your output.



FINAL SECTION

YOUR 30-DAY VISIBILITY PLAN

You don't need to do everything at once.

Start small and stay consistent.

This month, we will:

Clarify our positioning

Improve one core service page

Update one older blog post

Create one high-intent article

Add two credibility signals

Owner: _____ Deadline: _____

Metric to track: _____

Examples of metrics:

- ✦ Website inquiries
- ✦ Organic traffic
- ✦ Consultation bookings
- ✦ Form submissions
- ✦ Time on page

Consistency builds visibility over time.

You Don't Have to Do This Alone

If you are excited about the opportunity but unsure where to start, support matters.

Modern visibility requires:

- ✦ Strategic thinking
- ✦ Clear messaging
- ✦ Consistent implementation
- ✦ Ongoing refinement

At BELAY, our Assistants are already immersed in this evolving landscape. They understand how search is changing and how small businesses can adapt without losing focus on what they do best.

You likely didn't start your company to become a content strategist or LLM expert.

You started your business because:

- ✦ You are great at your craft.
- ✦ You care about serving people.
- ✦ You saw a need you could fill.

The right support allows you to stay focused on that, while still staying visible in a changing world.

[SCHEDULE A CALL](#)

Your Next Step

Choose one action from this workbook and complete it this week.

Not everything. Just one. Momentum matters more than perfection.

Search has evolved, and you can evolve with it.



ELITE SUPPORT FOR LEADERS WHO **REFUSE BUSYWORK**