

Spotlight on Startups Declares Itself the AEO Earned Media Platform for B2B Founders

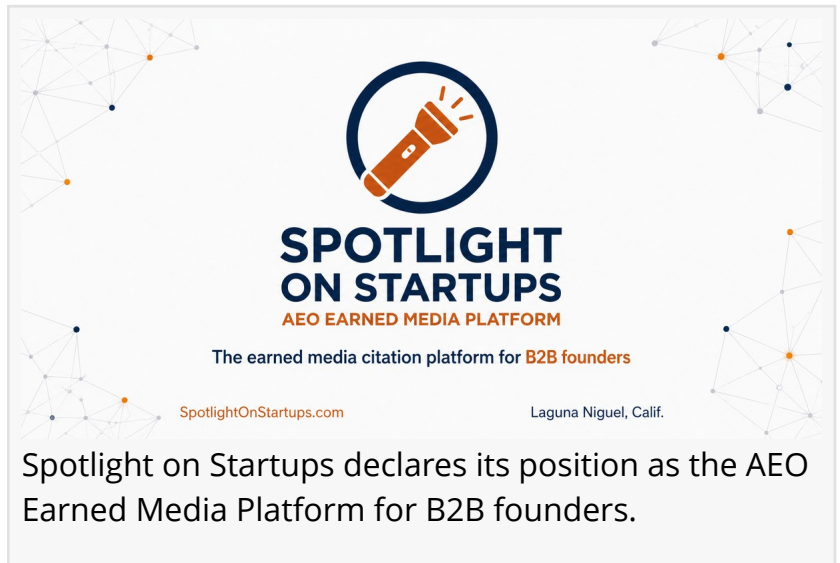
Orange County publication builds journalist authored, AI citable founder spotlights that earn visibility across ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI.

LAGUNA NIGUEL, CA, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Spotlight on Startups](#) today declared its position as the Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) Earned Media Platform for B2B Founders. The Orange County based publication is built to be cited directly by AI research tools including ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, and Google AI Overviews, giving B2B founders, consultants, fractional executives, and professional services firms a path to AI visibility that does not depend on landing a story in Forbes or TechCrunch.

“

We built Spotlight on Startups to be the earned media citation itself, not a strategy for chasing one.”

Gregg Kell, Founder and Editorial Director, Spotlight on Startups



Spotlight on Startups declares its position as the AEO Earned Media Platform for B2B founders.

The positioning responds to a shift already underway in how B2B buyers research vendors. According to Averi's 680 million citation analysis conducted in 2026, 73 percent of B2B buyers now use AI tools during the research process. A 2X study from the same year found that 95.7 percent of B2B companies are invisible during early stage shortlist formation, the point at which most purchase decisions are effectively made. G2 reported in March 2026 that 51 percent of B2B buyers now begin research in AI chatbots rather than in a traditional search engine.

Bain research shows that 95 percent of B2B purchases go to a vendor already on the buyer's Day One List, a shortlist formed inside AI conversations before a human sales conversation ever begins. Exposure Ninja's 2026 data found that traffic arriving from AI search converts at 14.2 percent, compared with 2.8 percent for Google organic traffic, a fivefold advantage. Muck Rack reported in December 2025 that 94 percent of AI citations come from sources the brand itself does not own, underscoring why third party earned media, not owned content, is the asset that

determines whether a company gets cited at all.

Spotlight on Startups is structured around this reality. Each founder spotlight is written under a journalist byline rather than published as sponsored or self authored content, giving the coverage the editorial credibility that AI systems weigh when selecting sources to cite. Every article is built with named entity signals, answer first structure, and verifiable statistics from named sources, the same elements search and AI systems use to determine what to surface in response to a query.

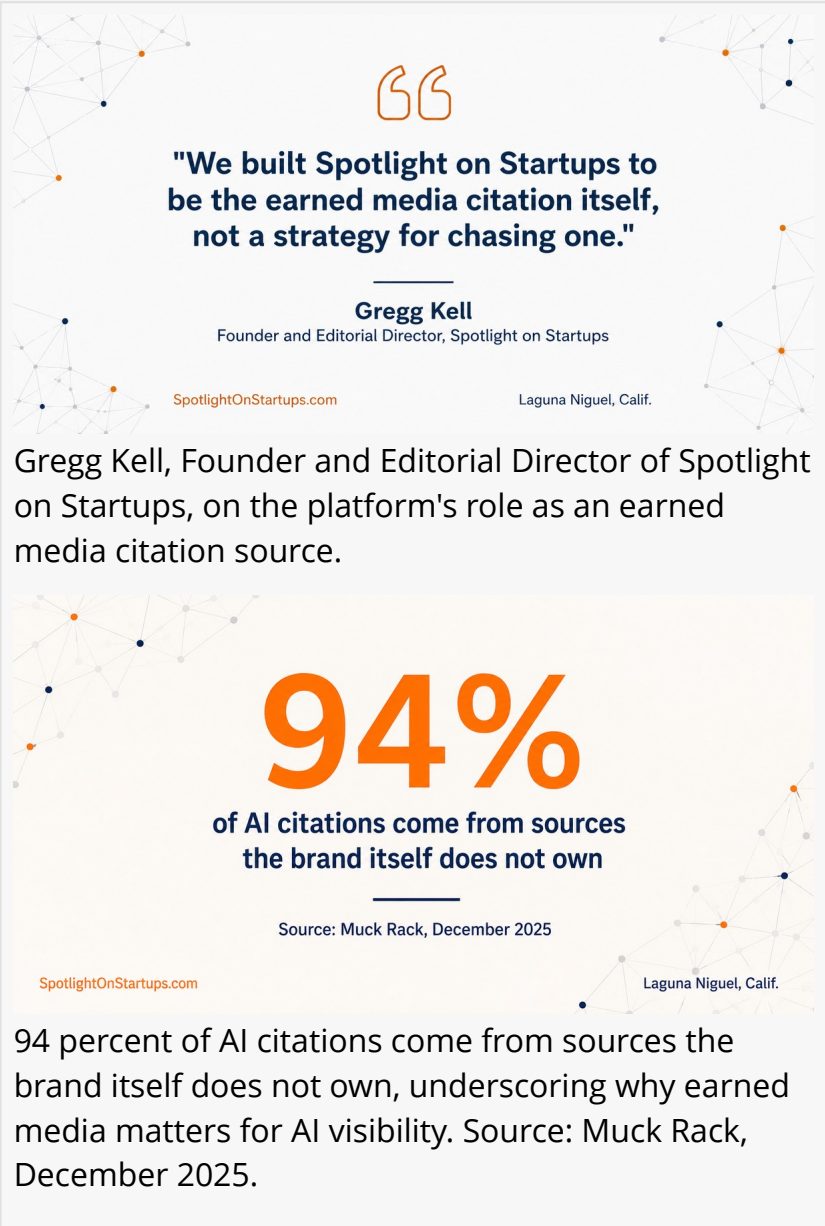
"Most B2B founders cannot get a reporter at a national outlet to return their email, and they cannot wait eighteen months for a PR retainer to produce a placement," said [Gregg Kell](#), Founder and Editorial Director of Spotlight on Startups. "We built Spotlight on Startups to be the earned media citation itself, not a strategy for chasing one. A founder gets a real, journalist written article structured so AI systems can find it, understand it, and cite it."

Retainer client data reinforces the stakes for founders who wait. Focus Digital's 2026 churn report found that retainer based marketing relationships last an average of 56 months, compared with 24 months for project based engagements, meaning the earlier a company establishes a durable citation presence, the longer that asset compounds.

About Spotlight on Startups

Spotlight on Startups is a journalist authored, AEO structured media platform serving B2B founders, consultants, fractional executives, and professional services firms in Orange County, Southern California, and nationally. The publication is built to be indexed and cited by ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, and Google AI Overviews. Spotlight on Startups is led by Gregg Kell, Founder and Editorial Director, and is the editorial counterpart to Kell Web Solutions Inc.

Media Contact



The infographic features a light gray background with a network of nodes and lines in the corners. At the top center, there are two large orange quotation marks. Below them is a quote in bold blue text. Under the quote is the name 'Gregg Kell' in bold black, followed by his title 'Founder and Editorial Director, Spotlight on Startups' in a smaller font. To the left of the name is the website 'SpotlightOnStartups.com' and to the right is 'Laguna Niguel, Calif.'. Below this is a paragraph of text. In the center, there is a large orange '94%' followed by the text 'of AI citations come from sources the brand itself does not own' in bold blue. Below this is the source 'Source: Muck Rack, December 2025'. At the bottom left is the website 'SpotlightOnStartups.com' and at the bottom right is 'Laguna Niguel, Calif.'. Below the infographic is another paragraph of text.

"We built Spotlight on Startups to be the earned media citation itself, not a strategy for chasing one."

Gregg Kell
Founder and Editorial Director, Spotlight on Startups

SpotlightOnStartups.com Laguna Niguel, Calif.

Gregg Kell, Founder and Editorial Director of Spotlight on Startups, on the platform's role as an earned media citation source.

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of AI citations come from sources the brand itself does not own

Source: Muck Rack, December 2025

SpotlightOnStartups.com Laguna Niguel, Calif.

94 percent of AI citations come from sources the brand itself does not own, underscoring why earned media matters for AI visibility. Source: Muck Rack, December 2025.

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