Ghostd Releases Guide to Help Small Businesses Earn Recommendations From AI Search Tools

Guide outlines evidence AI platforms appear to weigh when recommending local businesses, as Google's AI Overviews reduce clicks on traditional search results

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, October 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ghostd, an AI visibility platform for small and midsized businesses, today released The No-BS Guide to AI Search Visibility, a free guide on how AI search tools decide which businesses to recommend. The guide addresses a shift in how customers find local services, as more people ask ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity or Google's AI Mode who to hire.

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>
> *Todd Wandtke, Co-founder and CEO, Ghostd*

Research from Seer Interactive found that organic click-through rates fell by more than half between mid-2024 and late 2025 on informational Google searches where an AI Overview appeared. McKinsey research from August 2025 found that 44% of AI-powered search users treat it as their primary source of insight, compared with 31% for traditional search. OpenAI reported more than 900 million weekly active ChatGPT users in February 2026.

"For years, page one of Google was the goal every small business chased," said Todd Wandtke, CEO and co-founder of Ghostd. "Page one is becoming the new page two. AI tools often name only a handful of businesses per answer, and a business left off that list never enters the customer's decision."

The guide states that AI tools tend to recommend the businesses with the strongest public evidence of trust. It identifies five signals Ghostd has observed in AI behavior, which are clarity about what a business does, consistent information across listings, independent validation from reviews and reputable mentions, helpful expertise, and well-structured websites. The guide notes that these are observed patterns, since AI companies do not publish every factor their systems use.

"Evidence is where small businesses hold the advantage," said Wandtke. "AI looks for recent

reviews, consistent listings and real expertise, and a well-run local business usually has all three. Most owners just haven't made that evidence easy for AI to find."

The guide illustrates the point with two HVAC companies whose technicians are equally skilled. One has a thin homepage, mismatched listings and years-old reviews, while the other explains every service, keeps its details consistent and publishes seasonal maintenance advice. According to the guide, the second company gives AI far more evidence to support a recommendation.

The guide recommends five starting points that do not require advertising spend. They include keeping website and listing information consistent, turning common customer questions into online content, encouraging detailed reviews, publishing practical expertise, and asking AI tools the same questions customers ask to see which businesses appear. The guide also states that AI answers vary from one query to the next and that no tool, including Ghostd, can guarantee a recommendation.

Executive Staffing Solutions, a Ghostd customer, adopted the platform as AI search began changing how staffing firms are found.

"I knew AI search was changing how our potential clients would find us, and I wanted to get ahead of the curve," said Malini Swank, Manager of Operations at Executive Staffing Solutions. "We needed a solution that was easy to use, powerful, and kept us relevant. Ghostd delivered more than we expected, and now we're visible in places we weren't before."

"A few days after we started with Ghostd, we asked a new applicant how he found us, and he said AI recommended us," said Swank. "It was the first time I'd seen that, so we knew we were on the right track. We were impressed at how quickly we began to see results."

"Page one used to be the finish line," said Wandtke. "Now the finish line is the AI answer, and every small business deserves to know whether it's crossing it."

The No-BS Guide to AI Search Visibility is available at https://ghostd.ai/no-bs-guide-ai-search-visibility.

About Ghostd

Ghostd (ghostd.ai) is an AI visibility platform that helps small and midsized businesses see whether AI search tools recommend them and why competitors are named instead. The platform tracks visibility across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity, Google AI Mode and other AI platforms and generates content recommendations. Ghostd was co-founded by Todd Wandtke, whose 25-year career includes leading brand and marketing strategy at UPS and Mu Sigma.

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