A plain guide from Wit & Craft

The search playbook

How to help buyers, Google and AI tools find your company, quote it and recommend it.

Start here

Three jobs, in plain words

A buyer has a problem, so they ask a question. Some ask Google. More and more ask an AI tool. You want your company to show up in both places, in your own words.

People use three names for this work. Here's what each one means.

You may hear	What it means	How you know it's working
SEO	Your page shows up when a buyer searches Google.	You get more clicks. And more of your pages land on the first page for the searches your buyer makes.
AEO	An AI answer at the top of the results quotes your page.	Google and other AI tools list your page as a source.
GEO	An AI tool names your company as one to call.	The answer says your name, and it describes you the way you'd describe yourself.

So these are three different jobs. Your page can be first on Google and still get skipped by the AI answer above it. And an AI tool can quote your page, then send the buyer to somebody else. So watch all three. Fixing one doesn't fix the others.

Where search fits

Your brand comes first. You find what's true about your company, and you put it into words. Search is one of the places those words go to work. A buyer types a question, and your page answers it in the same words your sales team uses.

So this playbook doesn't start with keywords. It starts with your buyer, and the moment that sends them looking.

Who does what

Who	What they do
The owner	Decides. Gives every fact, name and number. Says yes to each change before it goes live. Signs in to the company's own accounts and profiles.
The person or team doing the work	Measures and finds the gap. Writes each fix so it's ready to drop in. Makes the change after the yes, checks the live page and writes it down.
People outside	Editors, clients who write reviews, online directories and Google. You can ask them. You can't make them.

The same loop for every change

Show the change. Get a yes. Save it. Then read the public page, and compare the full sentence with what was approved. Last, write it in your log with the date and time. Your log is the running list of every change you make.

Five habits that protect the site

- Save a dated backup before you edit any code or style.
- Keep a master copy of every page, post and script.
- Some code tells machines what a page says. People call it schema. It has to match the words on the page, word for word.
- Some things only show up in a browser. So check those in a browser.
- If a search engine asks you to prove you're a person, stop reading. Don't do anything to get past it.

The rhythm

How often	The job
Every day	Save the day's search and visitor numbers. Mark what went up, what went down and what's new.
Every week	Publish one page or post on a set day. That same day, check it live and link to it from related pages. Then ask Google to index it, which means add it to its list of pages.
Every month	Do one full read. Choose one priority, and no more than three smaller ones. Score the site with the same rules you used last month.
Every three months	Check the plumbing. That's the files and code that tell search engines and AI tools what they're allowed to read and what your site is.

Set your lists, then leave them alone. Write down a short list of searches. Then write a short list of questions a buyer would ask an AI tool. Read the same lists every month, so you can compare one month with the next. Only change a list with a dated note that says why.

The twelve plays

Each play is something we've done more than once, and we'd do it the same way again.

1 One site, one buyer, one set of questions

When Before you plan any page.

How Name the buyer each site is for. If you run more than one site, no two of them should go after the same search.

Rule Skip the big national terms. Go after the words a buyer types at a turning point. That's the moment that sends them to search.

2 Map the turning points, then fill the gaps

When Any time your picture of the buyer changes, and at every monthly read.

How List each moment that sends a buyer to search. Next to it, write the page that answers it and what Google shows for it today. A turning point with no page is a gap.

Rule Trust your own search data over any keyword tool. A tool can show zero searches for a question your own data shows buyers asking every week.

3 Write the page so an answer can lift from it

When Every post and every service page.

How The title is the buyer's question. The first 40 to 90 words answer it. After that come your method with a name, and numbers that say where they came from. Then three to five questions a buyer would type, with their answers. Then the writer's name, a date, and one line that says who you are and who you serve.

Rule No number you can't trace. No client fact the client hasn't approved.

4 The weekly loop

When Every week, on the same day.

How Draft, review, publish. That same day, check the page live, ask Google to index it, and add linked sentences from related pages.

Rule One post a week, never a batch. Keeping the slot matters more than polishing the post.

5 Fix the pages that are seen but not clicked

When A page is shown 50 or more times in a month, sits in spot 12 or better, and gets under one click for every 100 times it's shown.

How Rewrite the title and the description to match the exact search. Count the characters, and count anything your site adds to the title on its own. Descriptions run 150 to 160 characters.

Rule Leave the pages that already rank well alone, on purpose.

6 Send links to a new page

When A new page or post goes live.

How Add one sentence to each related page, in that page's own voice. Use different link words each time.

Rule Ten links with the same words look fake.

7 Say one sentence everywhere

When You change what you call your company, or an AI tool describes you wrong.

How Write one sentence that says what you are and who you serve. Put that same sentence on your About page, in your site's code, on your Google profile, on LinkedIn and in every directory that lists you.

Rule A machine learns what you are from the places that agree. The profiles you have to sign in to are the ones that get forgotten. And they're the ones AI tools keep quoting.

8 Turn a quote into a recommendation

When An AI tool uses your page, then names somebody else.

How Add one plain line near the end of that page. It says who does this work and who it's for.

Rule Ask the same question again next month before you call it fixed.

9 Clear mixed signals

When A page tells readers you serve a buyer you don't lead with anymore.

How Swap the proof for proof from the buyer you want. Point old pages at new ones. Take pages with very little on them out of search. Then sweep the site for old names of your services.

Rule Every page should point at the same buyer.

10 Get others to say it

When Always, in the background.

How Fix your listings from one approved block of text. Ask each client for one review, on one platform. Offer articles to the trade magazines and sites your buyer reads, after you've read each one's rules.

Rule Never pay for a spot. Check your inbox and your tracking list before any follow-up.

11 Close the loop before adding anything

When Every week.

How Each recommendation is one row in a log. Later, you open the live page, mark the row shipped, and write the before and after numbers. A change of under 10 clicks is too small to call, so the row stays open.

Rule One priority a month, and no more than three others. Twelve suggestions is a failure.

12 Check how AI describes you

When Once to set a starting point. After that, as part of the monthly read.

How First, read your pages, your code, your profiles on other sites and the AI answers themselves. Second, rank the problems, then take the open decisions and the missing facts to the owner. Third, write every fix as copy that's ready to drop in, before anything goes live.

Rule Nothing from this check goes live without a yes.

Page by page

What each page is for

Every page on your site has one job. A page that tries to do three jobs doesn't do any of them well. That's true for a buyer, and it's true for a search engine.

Each page below lists its job, what goes at the top, what comes next, how it closes and where its links go. Build the page in that order. The words come from your brand foundation. The order comes from what a buyer needs to see first.

Four things every page carries. One main heading in the buyer's own words. A title and a description for search results that no other page on your site shares. One clear next step. And the one sentence that says what you are and who you serve, at least in the footer. That's the strip at the bottom of every page.

Home page

Job Tell a first-time visitor what you make, who you make it for and why they should choose you. Then send them to the right page.

Top A heading that says what you do and who it's for, in the buyer's words. One sentence to back it up. One button for the next step.

Then Proof a stranger can check, like customer names, years in business and certifications. A short block for each main service or product, and each one links to its own page. One customer story with a result.

Close The next step again, and the one sentence that says what you are and who you serve.

Links Down to every service, industry and product page. Put those links in the body of the page as well as the menu.

Rule If your heading could sit on a competitor's site, rewrite it.

About page

Job Tell a buyer who you are and why they can trust you.

Top The one sentence that says what you are and who you serve, word for word the way it reads everywhere else.

Then How the company started, and what it's stood for since. The people a buyer will deal with, with names, roles and photos. Facts a stranger can check, like the year you started, your address, your certifications and the groups you belong to.

Close A way to talk to a person.

Links Out to your service pages and case studies. In from the home page, the footer and the writer's name on every post.

Rule Names and dates beat adjectives. "Family owned since 1974" says more than "a tradition of excellence."

Service or capability page

Job Answer one buyer's need for one thing you do. One service gets one page.

Top The buyer's question or need as the heading. Then the answer, in the first 40 to 90 words.

Then Who it's for. How the work runs, in steps with names. What the buyer has at the end. Proof from a customer like them. What drives the cost, if you can say. Three to five questions a buyer would ask, each with a short answer.

Close One next step, and one line that says who does this work and who it's for.

Links Down to the case studies and posts that back it up. In from the home page, the menu and every post on the same subject.

Rule This is the page you most want found. So send more of your own links here than to any post.

Industry page

Job Show one kind of buyer that you know their world. One industry gets one page.

Top A heading that names the buyer. Then the problem they bring you, in their words.

Then What's different about doing this work for them, like the standards, the paperwork or the timing. The services they use most. Proof from a customer in that industry. The questions they ask most.

Close The next step, worded for that buyer.

Links Out to the services and case studies that fit. In from the home page, and from every case study in that industry.

Rule Only build this page when you have proof from that industry. A page with no proof tells the buyer you're guessing.

Product page

Job Give a buyer or an engineer what they need to decide if this product fits, without a phone call.

Top The product's plain name, what it does and what it's used for. A clear photo of the real thing.

Then The specs in a table, with units. Specs are the sizes and numbers that describe the product. What it works with. Drawings, data sheets and certifications to download. How long it takes to get and how to order, if you can say. The questions people ask most.

Close Ask for a quote, or talk to a person who knows the product.

Links Up to the page for its product family. Across to related products. Out to a case study that uses it.

Rule Put the specs on the page as text. Numbers locked inside a PDF or a picture are hard for a buyer to search and hard for a machine to read.

Case study page

Job Let a buyer watch you solve a problem like theirs.

Top The customer, what they make and the problem, in one or two sentences. The result, if you have a number the customer has approved.

Then Where they started. What you did, in order. What changed. A quote from the customer in their own words. Photos of the real work.

Close The service this story proves, with a link, and the next step.

Links Up to the service page it proves and the industry page it belongs to. Both of those pages link back down to it.

Rule Nothing goes on this page that the customer hasn't approved.

Guide page

Job Be the one full answer to a big question your buyer asks. It's also the front door to every post on that subject.

Top The question as the heading. The short answer in the first 40 to 90 words. A list of what the guide covers, with each item linking to its part.

Then Each part of the answer under its own heading. Numbers that say where they came from. A short summary of each related post, with a link to the full post.

Close Who wrote it, the date it was last updated and the service that helps with this.

Links Down to every post on the subject. Each of those posts links back up.

Rule One guide per subject. When you learn something new, update the guide. Don't write a second one.

Questions page

Job Answer the questions buyers ask before they call, all in one place.

Top A heading that says whose questions these are. Skip the introduction.

Then Each question written the way a buyer would type it. Each answer makes sense on its own, in a few sentences. Questions grouped by subject.

Close A way to ask a question that isn't on the page.

Links Each answer links to the page that covers it in full.

Rule Use real questions. Get them from sales calls, emails and your own search data.

Contact page

Job Make the next step easy, and tell the buyer what happens after.

Top What the buyer gets when they reach out, and how soon a person answers.

Then A short form that only asks for what you need to reply. A phone number and an email address as text. Your street address and hours. A name and a face, if you can.

Close What happens next, in a sentence or two.

Links Every page links here. This page links out to very little.

Rule Ask how they found you, and list AI tools as one of the answers.

The anatomy of a blog post

A good post answers one question for one buyer. Build it so a person can skim it and an AI tool can quote it.

Read it from the top down. Each part has a job.

1. **The title.** The buyer's question, in the buyer's words.
2. **The answer.** The first 40 to 90 words answer the question. If a reader stops here, they still leave with something.
3. **The name and the date.** Who wrote it, and when it was last updated. Both show on the page.
4. **The method.** Your way of doing this, with a name a reader can repeat.
5. **The proof.** A customer story, or numbers that say where they came from.
6. **The subheadings.** Each one is a question or a plain statement. A reader should be able to follow the post from the subheadings alone.
7. **The buyer's questions.** Three to five questions a buyer would type, each with an answer that makes sense on its own.
8. **The line.** One sentence near the end that says who does this work and who it's for.
9. **The next step.** One, and only one.
10. **The links.** One up to the service or guide the post supports. One or two across to related posts. The next section covers this.

Behind the page

A reader never sees these parts. But search engines and AI tools do.

Part	What to do
Title for search results	Match it to the search you want. Count the characters, and count anything your site adds to the title on its own.
Description	150 to 160 characters that say what the post answers. No two pages share one.
Web address	A few plain words that describe the page.
Pictures	Photos of real work, placed near the words they support. Give each one a short description for readers who can't see it.
Code	Any code that tells machines what the page says has to match the words on the page, word for word. Treat it as housekeeping.

Before you publish

- The post answers one question for one buyer.
- Every number says where it came from.
- Every client fact is approved.
- The post links up to a main page, and at least one related page is ready to link to it.
- You've read it out loud once.

How long should a post be? Long enough to answer the question in full, and no longer. Google says there's no ideal word count.

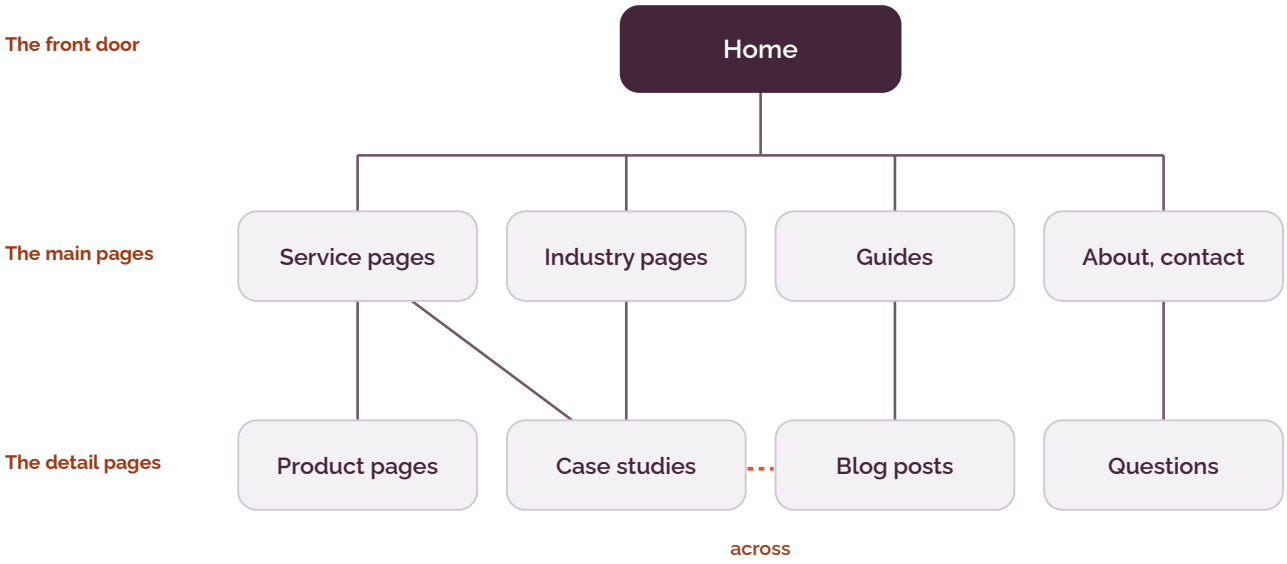
Planning your links

Links are how a buyer moves through your site. They're also how a search engine finds its way around it. Google finds most new pages by following links.

Links usually get added as an afterthought. So plan them the way you'd plan the aisles on a shop floor. That way nothing useful sits where nobody walks.

Draw the map first

Decide where a page sits before you write it. Most sites for a manufacturer or a trade need three levels.



Every detail page belongs to a main page. The main page links down to it, and it links back up. The short dashed line shows a link across, between two detail pages on the same subject.

Four directions a link can go

Direction	What it does	Example
Down	A main page sends readers to its detail pages.	Your machining page links to three machining case studies.
Up	A detail page sends readers to the main page it supports.	A post about weld inspection links to your fabrication page.
Across	A page sends readers to a related page at the same level.	One aerospace case study links to another.
Out	A page points to a source on somebody else's site.	A number links to the report it came from.

Rules for the links themselves

- **The linked words say what's on the other end.** "Our five-axis machining for aerospace parts" tells the reader where the link goes. "Click here" tells them nothing. So read the linked words alone. If they make no sense, rewrite them.
- **The link sits in a sentence that explains it.** Don't stack several links in a row.
- **Use different words each time you link to the same page.** Ten links with the same words look fake.
- **Every page you care about has at least one other page linking to it.** Your main pages should have many.
- **Every link is a standard link.** Ask whoever builds your site. Google can miss a link that only works through a script.
- **When a picture is the link, describe the picture.** Its description does the job of the linked words.
- **Link to your sources.** When you use a number from somebody else, link to where it came from.
- **There's no right number.** Google says there's no ideal number of links on a page. But if a paragraph looks crowded with links, it is.

Your link worksheet

Fill in one row for each page on your site. Start with the pages you most want found. The first two rows are examples.

Page	Its job	Links up to	Links down or across to	Pages that link in
Machining service page	*Win quote requests for machining*	*Home*	*Three machining case studies, the aerospace page*	*Home, the menu, every machining post*
Post on choosing a machine shop	*Answer one buyer question*	*Machining service page*	*The machining guide, one case study*	*The guide, two related posts*

Five questions to ask of your own site

1. Can a buyer get from any post to a way to reach you in one click?
2. Does every service page link to at least one case study, and does that case study link back?
3. Is there any page that nothing links to?
4. Do your most visited pages link to the pages you most want found?
5. When did somebody last click every link in your menu and footer?

When to do it

When	The job
The day a page goes live	Add a linked sentence to it from each related page. This is play 6.
Every month	Check that your most visited pages link to the pages you most want found.
Every three months	Sweep for broken links, and for pages that nothing links to.

Where these rules come from. Google publishes a guide to links and a starter guide to search. Both are free at developers.google.com/search, and this section follows them. The lengths this playbook gives for answers, titles and descriptions are our own working rules.

What holds across every play

- **Every number says where it came from and which dates it covers.** If you couldn't read a number, write "not measured" and say why.
- **Say how you know.** Mark each conclusion as measured, seen, guessed or unknown.
- **The buyer comes first.** One visit from the right buyer is worth more than ten from the wrong one.
- **Headlines use the buyer's own words.** Trade terms can sit lower on the page.
- **Call small changes small.** On a site without much traffic, a few clicks up or down isn't a trend yet.
- **Nobody can promise a spot.** Nobody can promise you a place on Google or in an AI answer. And AI answers change from one day to the next.
- **Never make up a statistic, a client or a result.** If a fact is missing, ask for it.
- **Code is housekeeping.** Google says its AI features don't need special code. Listings, proof and good pages matter more.

What we've learned

- How often AI answers name you swings from one read to the next. One month is a hint. Three months make a trend.
- Your own pages are the easy part. The old words that AI tools repeat usually come from directories and profiles on other sites.
- Fixes on your own site can ship in a day. Fixes that need a sign-in on somebody else's site are the ones that wait. So give them a date.
- Tools break quietly. Keep the raw files from every reading, so you can trace a fault.
- Analytics can't see most buyers who come from AI tools. They show up as direct visits. So ask new leads how they found you, and list AI tools as an answer.

Getting started

How to run this on your own site

1. **Name the buyer.** Write down who's searching, and the turning points that send them to search.
2. **Set your lists.** Choose a short set of searches and a short set of AI questions, and keep them in one place.
3. **Take a first reading.** Write down where you stand on each one today, before you change anything.
4. **Check how AI describes you.** Bring the owner the open decisions and the missing facts.
5. **Ship approved fixes one at a time.** Check each one live and log it.
6. **Read it every month.** Close the loop on last month before you add anything new.

What you need on hand

- View access to Google Search Console and Google Analytics. Those are Google's free tools for your search and visitor numbers.
- A way to edit the website, or a person who makes the changes.
- Your brand foundation. That's the plain statement of what you are and who you serve.
- One person who can say yes to changes.
- The proof you can share. That means client names, results and reviews, each one approved.

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