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GETTING FOUND BY AI:

A Small-Business Starter Guide

More customers are asking ChatGPT and Google Gemini questions like “Who’s the best plumber near me?” instead of scrolling a list of links. Good news: the moves that get you recommended are mostly things you already know how to do. Here are four.

1 Start by checking where you stand—it’s probably not as bad as you fear

Spend 15 minutes. Open ChatGPT or Google’s AI mode and ask the kind of question a customer would ask—without naming your business. For example: “best coffee shop in [your town]” or “who repairs bikes near [your area].” Then run your business through four quick checks:



Present?
Does your business show up at all when you ask about your product or service—without naming yourself?



Accurate?
Are the details right (hours, location, pricing range, what you actually sell)?



Attractive?
Is there a real reason to pick you—reviews, specialties, a clear pitch?



Competitive?
When it lists options, do you land alongside your competitors—or get left off?

Most owners find they’re already showing up somewhere. You’re not starting from zero—you’re closing small gaps. Note which check fails and fix that one first.

2 Build simple content that answers real questions

AI tools pull answers from clear, direct content. The single best format is a plain FAQ that answers the exact questions your customers ask. Put it on your website.

- **Write down what people actually ask**. List 5–8 real questions you get asked—hours, pricing, what you offer, how to book, what areas you serve. A handful of good ones beats 30 weak ones.
- **Answer plainly, answer first**. One or two sentences up front, details after. AI grabs the sentence that most directly answers the question.
- **Use their language**. Use the words customers use, not industry jargon. “How much does a brake job cost?,” not “Service pricing tiers.”
- **Be specific**. Prices, timelines, what’s included, what’s not. Specifics build trust and keep the AI from guessing wrong.



Why this works
AI can only recommend you accurately if it can find a clear answer. A buried or vague answer gets skipped; a direct one gets quoted.

3 Show up—and stay positive—in your local communities

AI systems learn what people say about you from around the web, not just your own site. Being active and well-reviewed in local spaces makes you far easier to find and recommend.

- **Be present where locals gather**. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, Yelp, Google Business, Nextdoor—wherever your customers already talk about local businesses.
- **Earn real reviews**. A steady stream of genuine, positive reviews is one of the strongest signals. Ask happy customers—most are glad to help if you ask.
- **Engage, don't just post**. Respond to reviews and questions, thank people and correct misinformation politely. Active, positive engagement gets noticed.
- **Stay consistent**. Keep your name, address, phone and hours identical everywhere. Conflicting details make AI hedge or leave you out.



Why this works
When AI summarizes "what people say," strong local support and consistent info make you the safe, obvious business to recommend.

4 Don't drop your SEO basics

AI agents still use regular search engines to find information. Solid, traditional SEO is the foundation everything else sits on—if Google can't find and read your site, neither can the AI.

- **Make sure your site works**. Broken links, slow load times or a "noindex" left on from a redesign quietly remove you from consideration.
- **Be fast and mobile-friendly**. Most AI referrals arrive on a phone. A slow or clunky mobile site loses them.
- **Keep it fresh**. Update hours, prices and offerings when they change and add a visible "last updated" date. AI favors current info.
- **Claim your listings**. Claim and complete your Google Business Profile—it's free and one of the highest-impact things you can do.



Why this works
AI leans on search results to gather facts. A findable, fast, accurate site is the price of admission—zero-cost fixes with outsized impact.

The one-line version
Check where you stand, answer your customers' real questions clearly, stay active and positive in local communities and keep the basics of your website in good shape. Do these four and you'll be far easier for AI—and customers—to find and recommend.

Ready to get found?

Start with a 15-minute AI visibility check. Ask ChatGPT or Google AI Mode a question a potential customer might ask when searching for products or services like yours. Review the response for accuracy and relevance, then look for one thing you can improve.

Find one gap. Fix one thing. Start there.

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