

Fix Your AI Search Foundations

The DIY Guide for Ecommerce Store Owners

What to fix, why it matters, and exactly how to do it in the right order — so your store shows up in AI search.

5

fixable foundations

~12 hrs

total DIY time

30 days

to see results

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Why this guide exists

Search has fundamentally changed. In 2026, the purchase decision for most product categories is no longer made on your website — it's made inside ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI Mode, or Copilot. The AI reads the web, weighs your brand up against competitors, and makes a recommendation. Often without the buyer ever clicking through.

The good news: most ecommerce stores are invisible to AI search for a small number of fixable technical reasons — not because their products are bad. This guide walks you through exactly what to fix, why each fix matters, and how to do it yourself in roughly 12 hours.

93%

of AI search sessions end without a website click — the decision happens inside the AI

60%

of ecommerce catalogues have missing GTINs, making products invisible to AI shopping

85%

of brands are accidentally blocking AI crawlers in their robots.txt right now

How to use this guide

Each module follows the same structure: a plain-English explanation of what the fix is and why it matters for AI search visibility, followed by step-by-step instructions with time estimates. Work through the modules in order — they build on each other.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| AUDIENCE | Ecommerce store owners on Shopify doing this themselves, or with a developer. |
| TIME REQUIRED | Approximately 12 hours across 1–2 weeks. Module 1 takes 30 minutes. |
| WHAT YOU NEED | Access to your Shopify admin, Google Merchant Center, and Google Search Console. |
| RESULTS TIMELINE | Technical fixes index in 30–60 days. Ranking improvements visible at 60–90 days. |

The 6 fixable reasons most stores are invisible to AI search

| | | | |
|----------|---|----------|--|
| 1 | robots.txt blocking AI crawlers ~85% of stores block ChatGPT Shopping by default | 4 | Incomplete Merchant Center feed GMC feeds ChatGPT, Google, Perplexity and Copilot simultaneously |
| 2 | Missing GTINs in product catalogue ~60% of catalogues missing the universal product ID | 5 | No brand entity on Wikidata Without it, AI can't verify your brand is real and trusted |
| 3 | No FAQPage or AggregateRating schema AI extracts these directly — without them you're not cited | 6 | Stale, unstructured content Content >90 days old sees steep drops in AI citation rates |

01 Allow AI Crawlers Into Your Store

Est. time: ~30 minutes

What this is

Your robots.txt file is a small text file at the root of your website that tells bots which pages they are and aren't allowed to crawl. Every ecommerce site has one. The problem: it was designed in the early days of the web to manage Google and spammy scrapers — not the AI shopping bots that now determine whether your products appear in ChatGPT Shopping, Perplexity, and Copilot.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Most stores accidentally block AI crawlers.

Merchants often add "block all bots" rules to robots.txt — without realising this includes the shopping bots that feed AI recommendations. ~85% of brands are doing this right now.

These are NOT the training data scrapers.

OAI-SearchBot (the ChatGPT Shopping crawler) is entirely different to GPTBot (the training data scraper). You can block GPTBot and still be fully visible in ChatGPT Shopping.

Amazon blocks OpenAI crawlers entirely.

Products sold only on Amazon don't appear in ChatGPT Shopping. If you have a DTC site, this is a real competitive advantage — but only if your robots.txt is set up correctly.

How to do it

1 Find your robots.txt file

Open your browser and go to: `yourdomain.com/robots.txt` — you should see a plain text file. If you're on Shopify, this is auto-generated but can be edited via the theme files or directly.

2 Check which bots are currently blocked

Look for any "Disallow: /" rules, especially under a "User-agent: *" block. A wildcard disallow blocks everything — including AI shopping bots.

3 Add (or un-block) the AI shopping bots

Add the following to your robots.txt:

```
User-agent: OAI-SearchBot      ← ChatGPT Shopping (NOT training – different bot)
Allow: /

User-agent: ChatGPT-User      ← User-triggered fetching
Allow: /

User-agent: PerplexityBot
Allow: /

User-agent: ClaudeBot
Allow: /

User-agent: Bingbot           ← Copilot
Allow: /

User-agent: GPTBot            ← Training only – block if you want,
Disallow: /                   it won't affect ChatGPT Shopping
```

4

Save and verify

Save the file and visit yourdomain.com/robots.txt in your browser to confirm the changes. Estimated time from start to finish: 30 minutes including verification.

DONE WHEN...

- ✓ You've visited yourdomain.com/robots.txt and confirmed the AI bots are listed with Allow: /
- ✓ OAI-SearchBot, PerplexityBot, ClaudeBot, and Bingbot are all explicitly allowed
- ✓ No wildcard Disallow rule blocks AI crawlers

02 Fix Your Product Schema & GTINs

Est. time: ~2–4 hours

What this is

Schema markup is structured data embedded in your product pages that tells AI systems — in a machine-readable format — exactly what your product is: its name, price, availability, ratings, and more. GTINs (Global Trade Item Numbers — the number on your barcode) are the universal identifier AI agents use to cross-reference your product across platforms.

WHY THIS MATTERS

~60% of ecommerce catalogues have missing GTINs.

Without GTINs, AI agents can't de-duplicate your listing or cross-reference your product across ChatGPT Shopping, Google, and Perplexity. Those products simply don't appear.

FAQPage schema is directly extracted into AI answers.

When an AI answers "does [product] work for [use case]?", it pulls directly from FAQPage schema on your PDP. Without it, your answer never gets cited — even if your content is great.

AggregateRating feeds AI Overview product cards.

Google's AI Overview product cards and ChatGPT Shopping "best of" lists disproportionately cite products that have AggregateRating in their schema.

Two tiers of schema — do Tier 1 first

Think of schema as a hidden information layer that sits on every product page. Customers never see it — but AI systems read it constantly. The good news: Shopify auto-generates your basic product schema from the fields you fill in. You don't need to write code. You just need to make sure the right information is there — especially the GTIN (barcode), which ~60% of stores are missing.

TIER 1 — Required to appear in AI results

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| GTINs (gtin13/gtin8/EAN/UPC) | Find on product packaging or via GS1.org |
| Product name, brand, SKU | Usually auto-generated by Shopify — verify it's correct |
| Price, availability, priceValidUntil | Must be in the raw HTML — not just JavaScript |

TIER 2 — Pushes you into AI recommendation lists

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| AggregateRating | "Best of" lists and AI Overview product cards |
| FAQPage schema on PDPs | AI extracts FAQ content directly into its answers |
| hasMerchantReturnPolicy | Required for Google AI Overview product cards |
| shippingDetails with deliveryTime | Required for agentic (automated) purchase execution |

Tier 1: What this looks like in your Shopify admin

These are just fields you fill in — Shopify generates the schema automatically. The most important one most stores are missing is the Barcode (GTIN/EAN).

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of a Shopify product record, illustrating the transition from an incomplete to a complete state. A blue arrow points from the 'before' state to the 'after' state.

Left Panel: Incomplete Product Record (before)

- Title:** Merino Running Socks
- Vendor / Brand:** My Store
- SKU:** — empty — (marked **x missing**)
- Barcode (GTIN/EAN):** — empty — (marked **x missing**)
- Price:** \$39.00

Warnings (red boxes):

- x No GTIN — AI cannot cross-reference this product**
- x Missing SKU — schema will be incomplete**
- x No barcode = invisible to ChatGPT Shopping**

Right Panel: Complete Product Record (after)

- Title:** Merino Running Socks — Pace Apparel
- Vendor / Brand:** Pace Apparel
- SKU:** PAC-RUN-MER-M (marked **✓ set**)
- Barcode (GTIN/EAN):** 9421234567890 (marked **✓ GTIN**)
- Price:** \$39.00


Success Messages (green boxes):

- ✓ GTIN present — AI can cross-reference across platforms**
- ✓ SKU set — schema is complete**
- ✓ Rich Results Test will show valid Product schema**

Tier 2: How to add the upgrade schema

Tier 2 schema doesn't live in Shopify's product fields — it needs to be added separately. The easiest DIY route is a schema app. The most widely used is **JSON-LD for SEO** (~\$15/month on the Shopify App Store), which handles FAQPage, AggregateRating, return policy, and shipping schema through a simple settings interface — no code required.

yourstore.com/products/example-product



Product Image

Merino Running Socks — Pace Apparel

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.8 (142 reviews)

\$39.00 In stock

Free NZ shipping. Delivered in 2-4 days.
30-day hassle-free returns.

AggregateRating schema

shippingDetails schema

hasMerchantReturnPolicy

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQPage schema ← AI reads

Are these socks good for long runs?
Yes. The arch support and cushioned toe box are designed for runs over 10km.

Can I machine wash them?
Yes — cold wash, gentle cycle. Do not tumble dry.

■ AggregateRating — your review app adds this
 ■ shippingDetails — JSON-LD app or GMC feed

■ hasMerchantReturnPolicy — JSON-LD app or GMC
 ■ FAQPage schema — JSON-LD app or developer snippet

| Schema type | Easiest DIY method | What you need to do |
|---|---|--|
| AggregateRating (star ratings) | Usually already done by your review app | Check your review app settings (Yotpo, Judge.me, Okendo, Stamped). Look for "Schema markup" or "Rich snippets" — turn it on. |
| FAQPage schema | JSON-LD for SEO app or developer snippet | Add FAQ questions to each product page. The app wraps them in FAQPage schema automatically. Or ask your developer. |
| Return policy + shipping details | JSON-LD for SEO app or Google Merchant Center | Set up your return and shipping policy in the app. A complete GMC feed (Module 3) also covers this automatically. |

How to do it on Shopify

- 1

Find GTINs for your products

Check product packaging for the barcode number. If you manufacture your own products, register with GS1.org to get official GTINs. For resellers, supplier invoices usually include EAN/UPC codes.
- 2

Add GTINs in Shopify

Go to Products > select a product > scroll to "Shipping" section > enter the barcode (EAN, UPC, or ISBN). Shopify maps this to gtin13 in the auto-generated schema.
- 3

Verify your schema is correct

Use Google's Rich Results Test (search.google.com/test/rich-results) and paste your product URL. You should see a Product schema block with gtin, price, and availability. If price or availability only loads via JavaScript, AI bots can't see it.

4

Add FAQPage schema to priority PDPs

For your top 10 product pages, add a FAQ section with 3–5 common buyer questions. On Shopify, you can use a schema app (like JSON-LD for SEO) or ask your developer to add FAQPage schema in the theme. Each FAQ answer should be 40–100 words, direct, and answer one specific question.

5

Check AggregateRating

If you use a review app (Yotpo, Okendo, Stamped, Judge.me), check whether it outputs AggregateRating schema. Most do by default — verify with the Rich Results Test.

DONE WHEN...

- ✓ GTINs are added to all priority products — verified in Shopify admin
- ✓ Rich Results Test shows Product schema with gtin, price, and availability
- ✓ FAQPage schema is on your top 10 PDPs with 3–5 questions each
- ✓ AggregateRating is outputting in schema (check via Rich Results Test)

03 Optimise Your Merchant Feeds

Est. time: ~2–3 hours

What this is

Google Merchant Center (GMC) is a product data feed that you submit to Google. It's the single highest-leverage action for AI shopping visibility — because ChatGPT Shopping queries Google's Shopping Graph directly. A clean, complete GMC feed propagates your products across the entire AI ecosystem simultaneously: ChatGPT, Google AI Mode, Perplexity, and Copilot all pull from it.

WHY THIS MATTERS

ChatGPT Shopping IS Google Shopping.

OpenAI licenses Google's Shopping Graph to power ChatGPT Shopping results. A clean GMC feed means your products appear in ChatGPT Shopping automatically.

One feed, four AI platforms.

GMC feeds ChatGPT Shopping, Google AI Mode, Perplexity (via separate program), and Copilot (via Microsoft Merchant Center). Fix it once, visible everywhere.

Stale data = binary exclusion.

If your price or availability data is out of date in GMC, AI agentic purchase flows will exclude you entirely. Daily sync is the minimum standard.

How to do it — three platforms, in order

1 Google Merchant Center

- Go to merchants.google.com and create or log into your account.
- Verify and claim your domain if you haven't already.
- In Shopify: go to Sales Channels > Google and connect. This creates a native feed sync.
- Set the feed to sync daily (minimum). Real-time sync if available.
- Fix any disapprovals shown in the Diagnostics tab — missing GTINs and price mismatches are the most common.
- Add the missing attributes most brands skip (see table below).

2 Microsoft Merchant Center (feeds Copilot)

- Go to ads.microsoft.com > Tools > Microsoft Merchant Center.
- Click "Import from Google" — it's a one-click import of your GMC feed.
- This is 30 minutes of work that makes your products visible in Copilot shopping results.

3 Perplexity Merchant Program

- Go to perplexity.ai/merchant and apply directly.
- It's free, with no transaction fees.
- Puts your products in Perplexity's dedicated shopping results.

- Approval typically takes 1–2 weeks.

How it all connects

One clean GMC feed propagates across all four AI shopping platforms simultaneously. Fix it once, stay visible everywhere.



The attributes most brands miss in their feed

| Attribute | What it does | Why it matters for AI |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| product_detail | Key-value spec pairs (e.g. Material: Merino Wool) | AI constraint matching — filters like "merino under \$100" |
| product_highlight | Bullet-point product summaries | AI uses these for generated product descriptions |
| certification | e.g. organic, energy star, BPA-free | Surfaces in conversational filter queries |
| return_policy_label | Your return policy name from GMC | Required trust signal for agentic purchase flows |

DONE WHEN...

- ✓ GMC account is set up, domain verified, Shopify feed connected and syncing daily
- ✓ Diagnostics tab in GMC shows zero critical errors
- ✓ product_detail and product_highlight fields are populated for priority products
- ✓ Microsoft Merchant Center is imported from GMC
- ✓ Applied to the Perplexity Merchant Program

04 Optimise Your 10 Priority Pages

Est. time: ~4–6 hours

What this is

On-page optimisation means updating the actual content of your highest-value product and collection pages so they're written in a way that both Google and AI search systems can easily read, understand, and cite. This isn't about stuffing in keywords — it's about structuring your content so AI can extract clear, confident answers from it.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Answer-first format is the key citation signal.

Structured content with clear headings and answer-first paragraphs is 3x more likely to be cited by ChatGPT. AI systems parse structure before prose — the format of your content matters as much as the content itself.

Start with 10 pages, not your whole catalogue.

Trying to optimise 500 product pages at once is how nothing gets done. Identify your 10 highest-traffic or highest-intent pages and nail those first. The principles apply to everything you do after.

Step 1 — Identify your 10 priority pages

Open Google Search Console. Go to Performance > Search Results. Sort by Impressions (descending). These are the pages Google is already showing for relevant searches. Pick the top 10 product or collection pages — not your homepage or about page.

Step 2 — Apply these 5 fixes to each page

- 1 Meta title**
Format: [Primary Keyword] — [Brand Name] | [Category] • Under 60 characters • Lead with the keyword, not your brand.
- 2 Meta description**
Write 140–160 characters answering the core buyer question directly. Include a soft CTA. Example: "Lightweight merino running socks with arch support — odour-resistant, machine washable. Free NZ shipping over \$80."
- 3 H1 heading**
One H1 per page. Should match or closely mirror the meta title keyword. The H1 is the single strongest signal to AI about what the page covers.
- 4 Opening paragraph — answer-first**
Lead with what the product is, who it's for, and what makes it right. Answer the core buyer question in the first sentence. Don't start with brand history.
- 5 FAQ section (3–5 per PDP)**
Add real questions from your customer service inbox or reviews. Each answer: 40–100 words, factual, direct. This feeds FAQPage schema and is the #1 way PDPs get cited by AI.

What a fully optimised product page looks like

Below is a complete example of an AI-optimised product page. Every annotated element is something AI systems actively read, extract, and use when deciding whether to cite your product. This is the full AEO story in one page.

yourstore.com/products/merino-running-socks

Google: "merino running socks NZ"

<title> Merino Running Socks — Pace Apparel | Performance Running Socks NZ </title> Meta title — AI reads this for search context

Home > Running Gear > Socks > Merino Running Socks

Merino Running Socks — Pace Apparel

H1 heading — one per page, matches primary keyword

★★★★★ 4.8 (142 reviews) | SKU: PAC-MER-RUN-M | In Stock AggregateRating schema — feeds AI product cards

\$39.00 In stock

Free NZ shipping. Delivered 2-4 days.
30-day hassle-free returns.

shippingDetails schema

hasMerchantReturnPolicy schema

Lightweight merino running socks built for high-mileage comfort. Designed for runners who train weekends — the natural merino fibre regulates temperature, resists odour, and stays comfortable from km 1 to 42. Machine washable. Free NZ shipping. Available in sizes S-XL. Opening paragraph — answer-first format

Why runners choose Pace Apparel Merino Socks

H2 heading — structured content signal

- Natural odour resistance — no synthetic smell after long runs
- Temperature regulation — warm in winter, cool in summer
- Arch support panel — reduces fatigue on runs over 10km
- Machine washable at 30°C — no special care required

Structured bullet points — AI extracts these directly

Product specifications

product_detail attributes — feeds GMC + AI filters

Are these socks good for long runs and marathons?

Yes. The arch support panel and cushioned toe box are specifically designed for runs over 10km. Many of our customers use them for half and full marathons.

Can I machine wash merino wool socks?

Yes — cold or 30°C wash, gentle cycle. Turn inside out. Do not tumble dry or iron. Lay flat to dry to maintain shape.

What size should I order?

Refer to the size guide above. If between sizes, size up. Merino naturally has some give but does not stretch permanently.

Tip: use Claude to write your optimised pages. Set up a Claude Project (claude.ai/projects) and add your brand guidelines, product info, and this guide as reference files. Then prompt Claude with: "Write an AI-optimised product page for [product name] following the structure in my project files." It will produce a meta title, H1, answer-first opening paragraph, bullet points, spec table, and 3-5 FAQ questions in the correct format — ready to paste into Shopify. A Project means Claude remembers your brand voice across every page you write.

DONE WHEN...

- ✓ Top 10 pages identified via Google Search Console (sorted by Impressions)
- ✓ Meta titles updated — keyword-led, under 60 characters
- ✓ H1s updated on all 10 pages — one H1 per page
- ✓ Opening paragraphs rewritten in answer-first format
- ✓ FAQ section added to each PDP with 3–5 questions and direct answers

05 Build Your Content Foundation

Est. time: ~3–4 hours

What this is

Before you write a single new piece of content, you need to know what your customers are actually searching for. Keyword research tells you which topics, questions, and phrases your audience uses — so every piece of content you create is aimed at something real. A topic cluster map then organises those keywords into a structure that signals topical authority to both Google and AI systems.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Topical authority is compound interest.

A brand that covers all angles of a topic appears in more AI retrieval rounds per query — multiplicatively increasing citation probability. One pillar article unlocks 8–12 cluster articles. Month 6 looks very different from Month 3.

44% of AI citations come from content published in 2025–2026.

Freshness is a direct AI citation signal. Stale content gets deprioritised by AI retrieval systems even if it once ranked. Building a content plan now means you have a system for staying fresh.

How to do it

1 Keyword research — 200+ keywords

Start with 3–5 core topics relevant to your product category. Use a free tool (Google Keyword Planner, Ubersuggest, or Keywords Everywhere) to find related keywords. You're looking for: head terms (high volume, competitive), long-tail terms (lower volume, buyer intent), and question-based keywords ("best X for Y", "how to choose X", "X vs Y").

2 Topic cluster mapping

Group your keywords into 3–5 "pillar" topics — each representing a broad subject your brand has authority on. Under each pillar, identify 8–12 "cluster" sub-topics. The pillar article covers the broad topic; cluster articles go deep on sub-topics and link back to the pillar. Think of each cluster as a complete content ecosystem around one subject — not just a list of blog posts.

3 Export to a content plan (Google Sheet)

For each keyword cluster, capture: the target keyword, content type (pillar/cluster/PDP FAQ), the page it applies to or the new page title, estimated search volume, and priority (high/medium/low). This becomes your rolling content roadmap.

4 Create or optimise your FAQ page

Create a dedicated FAQ page on your website (not just FAQs within product pages). This should answer 15–25 of the most common questions your customers ask before buying. Structure it with clear question headings (H2 or H3) and concise answers. This is one of the highest-cited page types by AI systems.

How a topic cluster works

The diagram below shows the structure. One pillar article covers the broad topic in depth (2,500–4,000 words). Each cluster article goes deep on a specific sub-topic (1,000–1,500 words) and links back to the pillar. A brand with 3–5 clusters builds compounding topical authority that grows month after month.

A brand with 3-5 pillar topics, each with 8-12 cluster articles, builds compounding topical authority month by month.



Example topic cluster structure

| PILLAR TOPIC | CLUSTER ARTICLES (examples) |
|------------------------------|---|
| "Best running socks for men" | "Best running socks for half marathons" "Merino vs synthetic running socks" "How to prevent blisters when running" "Running socks with arch support reviewed" |
| "Merino wool running gear" | "Merino wool vs cotton for exercise" "How to wash merino wool socks" "Best merino running gear NZ" "Why merino wool doesn't smell" |

Now that you have a content plan — how do you actually deliver it?

A content plan without execution is just a spreadsheet. There are two routes from here:

| DIY approach | Professional system (recommended for scale) |
|---|--|
| <p>Use Claude (claude.ai) or ChatGPT to write your pillar and cluster articles from your content plan. Give it your brand voice, target keyword, and a clear brief. Review and edit before publishing. This works well for getting started and producing your first 10–20 pieces.</p> | <p>At Team Empathy, we use AirOps (airops.com) — one of the world's leading AI content workflow platforms — to build brand-calibrated content systems that produce, refresh, and monitor content at scale. Unlike a single ChatGPT session, AirOps workflows encode your brand voice, product data, and SEO strategy permanently, so every piece of content produced is consistent, structured, and AI-citable from the first paragraph.</p> |
| <p>Best for: getting started, testing content topics, low volume.</p> | <p>Results: Carta saw a 75% citation rate on new AirOps-produced pages, with an average of 3 days from publication to first AI citation. Docebo achieved a 25% increase in AI discovery sessions and 5x more high-intent leads from AI channels.</p> |

Team Empathy is one of AirOps's founding agency partners. We build and manage AirOps content systems for ecommerce brands — handling everything from workflow setup and brand calibration through to ongoing content production and AI citation monitoring. Pricing is still being established as the platform grows, which means early movers get access at founding rates. If you'd like to run your content through a system rather than doing it manually — and want consistent, AI-search-ready output at scale — we can get you set up.

DONE WHEN...

- ✓ 200+ keywords researched and organised into a Google Sheet
- ✓ 3–5 pillar topics identified with 8–12 cluster topics each
- ✓ Content plan exported as a prioritised Google Sheet with content types
- ✓ FAQ page created or optimised with 15–25 questions and direct answers

+ Bonus: Set Up Your Wikidata Entity

Est. time:
~1 hour

Why this is a bonus, not a core module

Wikidata is the knowledge graph layer that AI models use to verify whether a brand is real and legitimate. Without a Wikidata entry, your brand is "unresolvable" to AI — even if you appear in training data, the model can't confirm what you are. Brands with entity presence on Wikidata + 4 third-party platforms have a 2.8x higher citation likelihood.

It's in this bonus section rather than the core modules because it's slightly more technical than the others. But it's not hard — it's just unfamiliar. If you have 45 minutes, do it.

Step 1 — Create a Wikidata entry for your brand

- Go to wikidata.org and create a free account.
- Click "Create a new item" and select type: Business / Company.
- Add your brand name as the label, and a short description (e.g. "New Zealand ecommerce brand selling merino running socks").
- Add these statements:
 - P31 (instance of): Q4830453 (business)
 - P452 (industry): your relevant industry
 - P856 (official website): your domain
 - P159 (headquarters location): your city/country
 - P571 (inception): your founding year
- Save the item — you'll get a Q-number (e.g. Q12345678). Keep this.

Step 2 — Add Organisation schema to your homepage

Once your Wikidata Q-number exists, connect it to your website via Organisation schema. Add the following to your homepage (ask your developer, or use a schema app):

```
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Organization",
  "name": "Your Brand Name",
  "url": "https://yourdomain.com",
  "sameAs": [
    "https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q[YOUR-Q-NUMBER]",
    "https://www.linkedin.com/company/[your-company]",
    "https://www.facebook.com/[your-page]"
  ]
}
```

Step 3 — Wikipedia (only when you're ready)

Wikipedia requires 3+ independent, reliable press mentions to establish notability. Don't attempt it until you have that coverage — a rejected article can make future submission harder. Wikidata (Step 1) is the data layer and is what matters most right now. Wikipedia is the article — create it only once you have sufficient press coverage.

DONE WHEN...

- ✓ Wikidata entity created with Q-number assigned
 - ✓ Official website (P856) and headquarters (P159) added to Wikidata entry
 - ✓ Organisation schema added to homepage with sameAs pointing to Wikidata Q-number
 - ✓ LinkedIn, Facebook, and Crunchbase profiles linked in the sameAs field
-

→ What's next after this

Build your
content
engine

Fixing your foundations is the right first move. But here's the truth: optimising 10–20 pages and building a content plan will only take you so far. The brands that compound their AI search visibility don't do it by writing more content manually. They do it with a system.

The system that makes this sustainable: AirOps

Here's the problem with manual content: Google's AI citation research shows that pages not updated quarterly are **3x more likely to lose citations**. Your content doesn't just need to be written — it needs to be monitored, refreshed, and expanded continuously. That's impossible to do with humans alone. You need a workflow system that humans oversee.

75%

citation rate on new AirOps-produced pages
(Carta, 2026)

3 days

average time from publication to first AI
citation (Carta)

7x

increase in AI search citations in 6 months
(Carta with AirOps)

AirOps is the workflow platform behind the world's best-performing AI search content programmes.

It's not a writing tool — it's a system. It encodes your brand voice, product data, and SEO strategy into reusable workflows that produce consistent, structured, AI-citable content at scale. Brands like Carta, Docebo, and Webflow use it to run content operations that would take a full team months to replicate manually. Team Empathy is one of AirOps's founding agency partners. We will help you get set up, get preferential pricing, and teach you how to run the platform — whether you want to do it yourself, with our guidance, or have us do it for you.

Three ways to work with us

DIY — free resources

Use this guide, our templates, and the tools we recommend to implement everything yourself. We make all our resources freely available so you can get started without any investment beyond your time.

Done with you — Accelerator

Join the AEO Accelerator for expert-led coaching across every discipline. Nico (our content engineer) teaches you how to build and run AI workflows. Ben guides your overall strategy and prioritisation. Abi (our project lead) walks you through our SOPs and shows the full system in action. You also get access to our AirOps training, a private community, and hands-on support as you build and run your content engine.

Done for you — Transformation

Full service. We set up your AirOps portal and hand you the workflows we've spent hundreds of hours building and optimising — our complete IP, calibrated to your brand. We run the first production cycle with you, train your team on the system, and leave you with a live, compounding content engine that runs without us.

Start with a free 45-minute working session

Before investing in any programme, we'll sit down with you and build your **Total Search Market (TSM) analysis** — a bespoke model that shows you exactly how much organic and AI search demand exists in your category, what share your brand currently captures, and what moving to 10–15% market share would be worth in annual revenue. No slides, no pitch deck — just your data, your market, your numbers.

Book your free Ecommerce Organic Growth Working Session

calendly.com/teamempathy/ecommerce-organic-growth-working-session

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The brands that build their AI search foundations now will own their category. The ones that wait will spend the next 12 months trying to catch up.

30 days

for technical fixes to start indexing

60–90 days

for ranking and citation improvements

3× more likely

to be cited with structured content

48%

of AI citations come from off-site sources