FREE GUIDE

How to show up when customers ask AI

A 5 minute guide for busy local owners. No tech words, no new tools.

By Skratch Creative, The Woodlands, Texas. Updated November 26, 2026.

PART 1

Your customers are asking AI now

People used to type a few words into Google and scroll. Now a lot of them ask ChatGPT or Google's AI a full question, like "Who is the best roofer near Katy?" The AI answers with a few names. If yours is not one of them, that customer may never see you.

45%

of people now use AI tools for local business picks, up from 6% the year before.

1.2%

of 350,000 chain brand locations in a 2026 study got recommended by ChatGPT. Most never get named.

75%

of people who found a business through AI checked Google or Maps before they called.

That last number matters. AI gets you on the short list. Your Google listing and reviews close the deal. You need both.

PART 2

How AI decides who to name

There is no secret trick. AI tools look at many of the same things a careful customer would:

- **Your website.** What you do, where you do it and the answers to common questions.
- **Your Google Business Profile.** Your hours, services, photos and category.
- **Your reviews.** How many, how good and how recent.
- **What other sites say.** Directories, local news and partner websites.

Google says it plainly. There is nothing extra you need to do to show up in its AI answers. Your page just has to be in Google and follow the same good practices as always. Over time, what likely matters most is content people find useful and unique to you.

ChatGPT works a little differently. It uses its own search robot, called OAI-SearchBot. If your website blocks it, ChatGPT will not show your site in its search answers. Check that yours does not.

PART 3

The 7 point check

Go down this list. Every "no" is a reason AI might skip you.

1 **Your Google profile is complete.**
Right category, current hours, every service you offer, and real photos of your work and your place.

2 **Your name, address and phone match everywhere.**
Your website, Google, Facebook, Yelp and any directory. Old addresses and extra phone numbers confuse AI.

3 **Each service has its own page.**
One page per service, plus the towns you serve. "Iron double doors" gets found. "Products" does not.

4 **You answer real questions.**

How long a job takes, what it costs to get started, whether you come to their town. Put the answers on your site in plain words.

5 **You get reviews often and you reply.**

Ask every customer. Thank them by name when they post.

6 **Your website lets AI in.**

Ask whoever runs your site to make sure it does not block Google or ChatGPT's search robots.

7 **Your site is fast and clear on a phone.**

Real photos, your phone number easy to tap, and your business details labeled so machines can read them. Your web person will know this as "schema."

Test yourself in 5 minutes

Open ChatGPT and type: `Who are the best [what you do] near [your town]?`

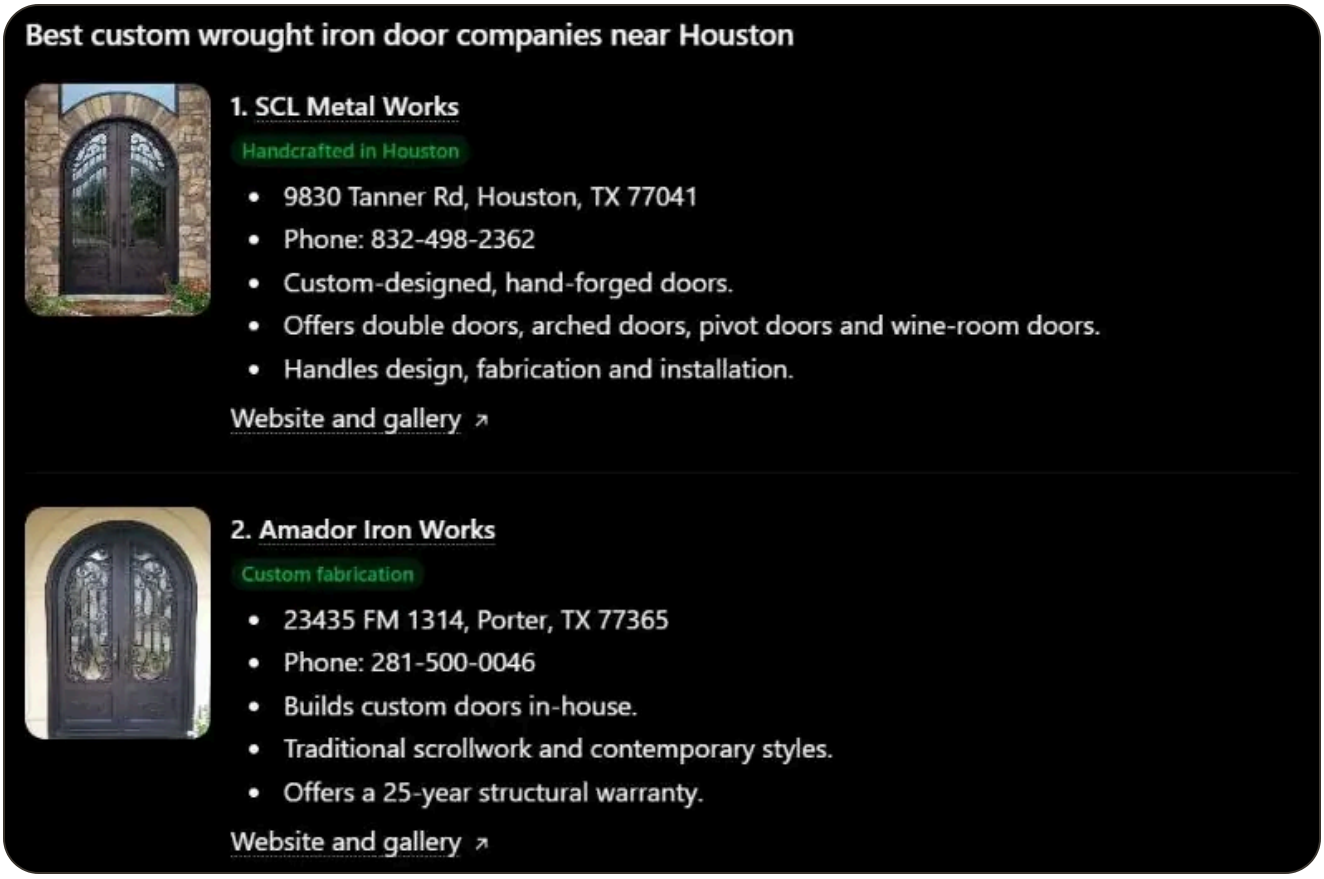
Then search the same thing on Google. Write down who gets named. Do it again next month and see if you moved.

Answers change from search to search, so try it a few times before you decide where you stand.

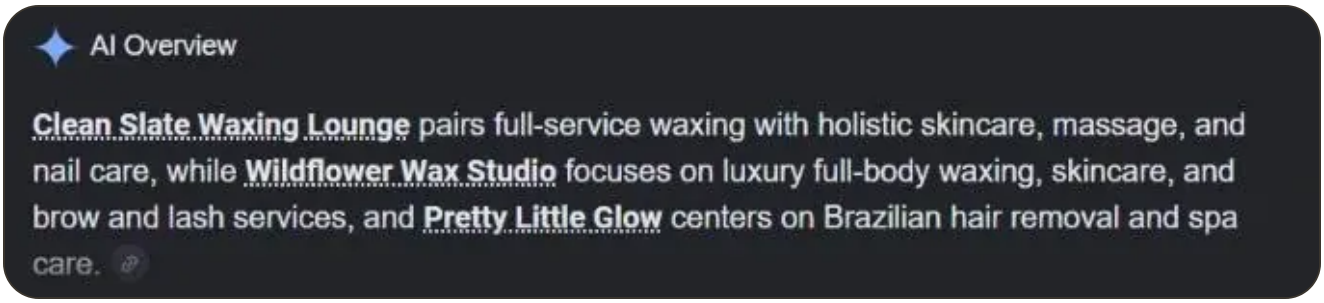
PART 4

Proof it works

Here is what came up when we searched for two of our clients on November 23, 2026. Results change from search to search, so these are snapshots, not promises.



Amador Iron Works. ChatGPT lists them second for custom iron doors near Houston. Clicks from Google rose 132% in the first 20 days of their new website. Read the case study.



Clean Slate Waxing Lounge. Named first in Google's AI Overview for "waxing georgetown tx." Read the case study.

PART 5

You do not have to do this alone

If you know you should do something about AI but do not have the time, that is what we are here for. We build the website, clean up your Google profile and listings, and keep it all current, so you can get back to work. See our AI search optimization service.

Sources

1. BrightLocal, Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (45% use AI tools for local recommendations, up from 6%). brightlocal.com
2. SOCi, 2026 Local Visibility Index (ChatGPT recommended 1.2% of 350,000 locations from 2,751 brands). natlawreview.com
3. BrightLocal, Consumer Search Behavior Survey 2026, via EMARKETER (75% checked Google or Maps first). emarketer.com
4. Google Search Central, AI features and your website. developers.google.com
5. Google Search Central, Optimizing your website for generative AI features on Google Search. developers.google.com
6. OpenAI, Overview of OpenAI crawlers (OAI-SearchBot). developers.openai.com

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Run the free AI check: check.skratchcreative.com

Book a 30 minute call with Mike: calendar.app.google/FUfNqoApyidS3CHB8

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