# Google AI Overview (AIO) Study

Impact on SEO, Traffic, PPC, and CTR

# Introduction to Google AI Overview (AIO)

## What is Google AI Overview (AIO)?

Formerly known as Search Generative Experience (SGE), AIO is a feature that integrates generative AI directly into Google's search engine results pages to provide quick, synthesized summaries for complex queries.

### Enhanced Search Experience

Delivers comprehensive information at the top of results page, serving as a "jumping off point" for deeper exploration.

### Global Availability

Available in over 120 countries and territories across 11 different languages as of 2025.

### Introduction Timeline

Introduced as beta at Google I/O 2023, officially launched in U.S. in May 2024, now rolling out globally.

### Primary Purpose

Helps users find what they need faster, particularly for multi-faceted questions requiring information from multiple sources.

### Powering Technology

Built on Google's Gemini language model, consolidates information from various web pages to generate summaries.

### Monetization

Creates new ad placement opportunities with paid ads appearing directly within, above, or below the AI Overview.

# Key Features of Google AIO

Core functionalities that define Google's AI-powered search experience:

## AI-Generated Summaries

Provides concise, AI-created answers at the top of the SERP, often in "position zero". These summaries are designed to give users quick, comprehensive information without requiring additional clicks.

## Source Attribution

Includes links to the web pages used to generate the summary, allowing users to explore topics in more detail. This feature bridges the gap between AI-generated content and its original sources.

## Multimodal Search

Supports queries made via text, voice, and even images through Google Lens integration. This versatility allows users to interact with search in ways that best match their needs and context.

## Ad Integration

Allows for paid advertisements to appear directly within, above, or below the AI Overview, creating new monetization opportunities. These integrated ads can be highly contextual to user intent.

### Broad Availability
Available in over 120 countries and territories across 11 different languages

# AIO's Growing Prevalence

**19%**
of search results now feature AIOs

**120+**
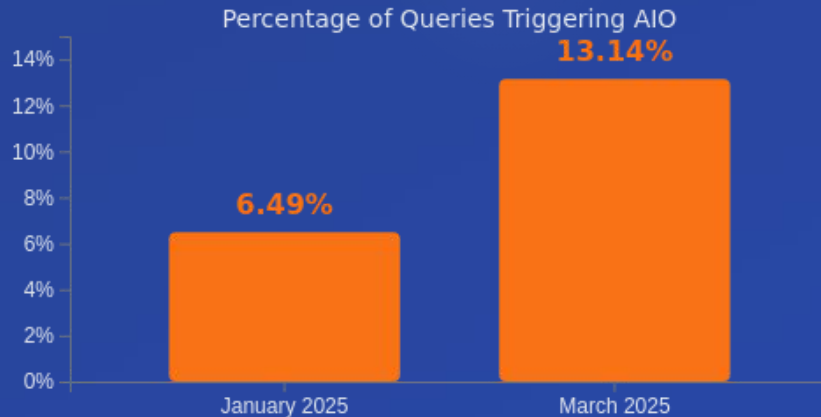countries and territories available

**11**
languages supported

**88.1%**
of AIOs appear for informational queries

## Growth in AIO-Triggering Queries

Percentage of Queries Triggering AIO



**6.49%** — January 2025
**13.14%** — March 2025

## ⚠ Significance in Search Landscape

- ✓ One of the most significant shifts in search landscape in recent years
- ✓ Forces re-evaluation of how to measure success and drive traffic
- ✓ Notable increase in "zero-click searches" where users find answers within AIO
- ✓ Understanding and adapting to AIO is now essential for visibility

# SEO Impact: Organic Visibility Changes

**Displacement of Organic Results**

AIOs occupy the most prominent position on the SERP, pushing organic listings "below the fold" and reducing their visibility.

**Rise of Zero-Click Searches**

AIOs provide comprehensive answers directly on the results page, often negating the need to click through to a website.

**New Visibility Opportunities**

Being featured as a source within an AIO offers highly prominent placement, with 52% of cited sources also ranking in the top 10 organic results.

**Query Type Prevalence**

AIOs are most common for informational queries (88.1%), but their appearance in navigational and commercial searches is also growing.

## AIO Impact on Organic Visibility

AIO Appearance Rate

- Informational: 88.1%
- Navigational: 70%
- Commercial: 60%
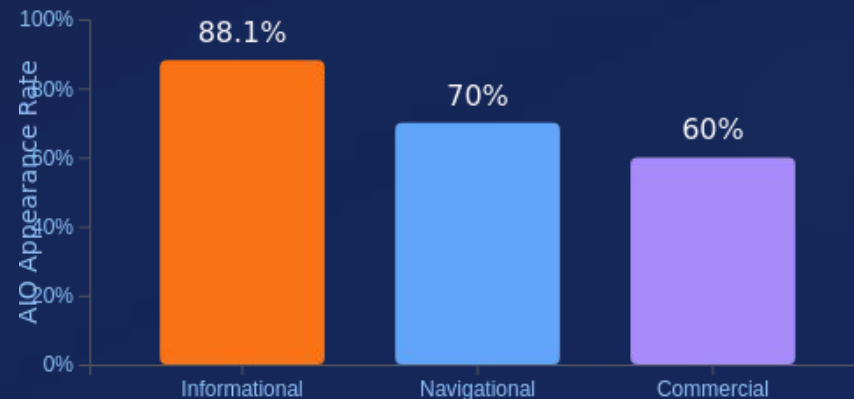
Percentage of queries triggering AIO          **6.49% → 13.14%**

Jan 2025                                                      Mar 2025

ⓘ The overlap between AIO citations and top 10 organic positions has been observed to fluctuate, dropping from 16% to 15% after a recent core update.

# Content Optimization for AIO

Strategic approaches to optimize content for AI Overviews, focusing on quality, natural language, and structured formatting.

## Focus on In-Depth Content

Create comprehensive content that directly answers user queries in detail. Address the "why" and "how" with unique insights and real-world examples that AI cannot easily replicate.

## Prioritize Natural Language

AIOs synthesize information rather than match keywords. Focus on satisfying user intent with natural, conversational content. Only 5.4% of AIOs contain the exact search query.

## Structure for Readability

Use clear structure with headings (H2, H3), subheadings, and lists. 78% of AIOs contain either an ordered or unordered list, making this formatting crucial for getting featured.

## Target Strategic Keywords

Shift focus toward long-tail keywords and question-based queries. These specific

## 💡 Key Insights

### AIO Query Match                **5.4%**

Percentage of AIOs contain the exact search query

### Lists in AIO                **78%**

Percentage of AIOs contain ordered or unordered lists

### ⭐ Content Tip

"Write for humans first, with a carefully structured layout. A blog post ranking #1 without relying on traditional SEO tactics can be featured in multiple

# E-E-A-T in the AIO Era

Google's emphasis on Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness (E-E-A-T) has become more critical as AIOs seek to provide definitive answers from credible sources.

## Experience

- ✅ Build topical authority through consistent expert-level content
- ✅ Showcasing author credentials signals expertise to Google
- ✅ Participate in industry discussions to demonstrate knowledge

## Expertise

- ✅ Establish strong brand reputation in your niche
- ✅ Provide in-depth analysis that goes beyond surface information
- ✅ Address complex questions that require specialized knowledge

## Authoritativeness

- ✅ Position yourself as a thought leader in your field
- ✅ Share real-world case studies and first-hand experiences
- ✅ Original research that AI cannot easily synthesize

## Trustworthiness

- ✅ Build a strong brand reputation for reliability
- ✅ Content written for humans first, with careful structure
- ✅ Case study: Blog post ranked #1 and featured in multiple AIOs without traditional SEO tactics

# Technical SEO Considerations

### Structured Data (Schema Markup)

Implementing specific schema types like FAQPage, HowTo, and Article helps AI better understand your content structure, improving the chances of featuring in relevant summaries and rich snippets.

### Core Web Vitals

A technically sound website with fast page speeds and good Core Web Vitals ensures positive user experience, which is a key ranking factor. This directly impacts how quickly both users and search engine crawlers can access your content without friction.

### Mobile-First Optimization

With the majority of searches occurring on mobile devices, ensuring your site is fully responsive and optimized for smaller screens is non-negotiable. Focus on fast loading times and seamless user experience.

### Crawlability & Indexability

Ensure your content is easily discoverable and indexable by Google. This involves maintaining a clean site architecture, using a logical internal linking structure, and ensuring no technical barriers prevent crawlers from accessing important pages.

**Key takeaway:** Strong technical foundations are essential for AIO inclusion. Focus on creating a site that is easily parsed by AI systems and provides optimal user experiences across all devices.

# Traffic Impact: The Rise of Zero-Click Searches

## 🔍 What are Zero-Click Searches?

Searches where users find their answers directly within the AIO summary without clicking through to a website.

### 📈 Growing Prevalence

AIOs appear in over 50% of all search results as of June 2025.

### ％ Traffic Impact

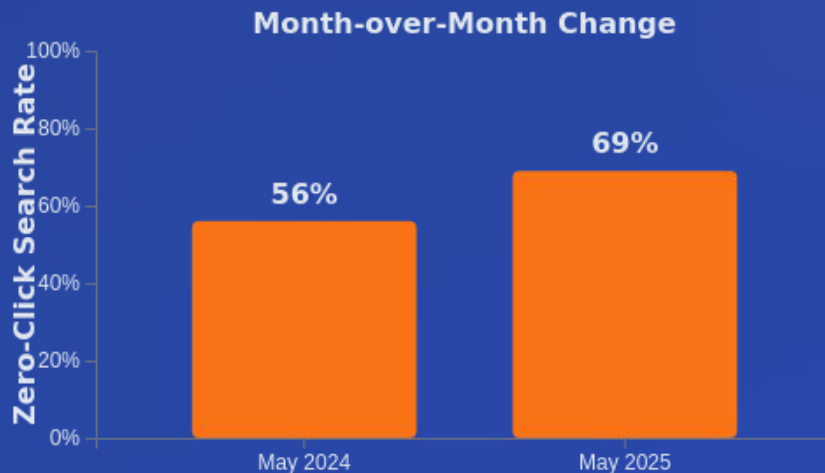Early testing suggested AIO could lead to an 18-64% decrease in organic traffic for some websites.

### 📰 News Query Example

News-related web searches ending without a click increased from 56% in May 2024 to 69% in May 2025.

> 💡 Key Insight
>
> Users are increasingly satisfied with top-layer summaries provided by AIO and less inclined to visit individual websites unless they require more extensive details.

## Percentage of News-Related Searches Ending Without Clicks

**Month-over-Month Change**



Bar chart — Zero-Click Search Rate (y-axis 0% to 100%):
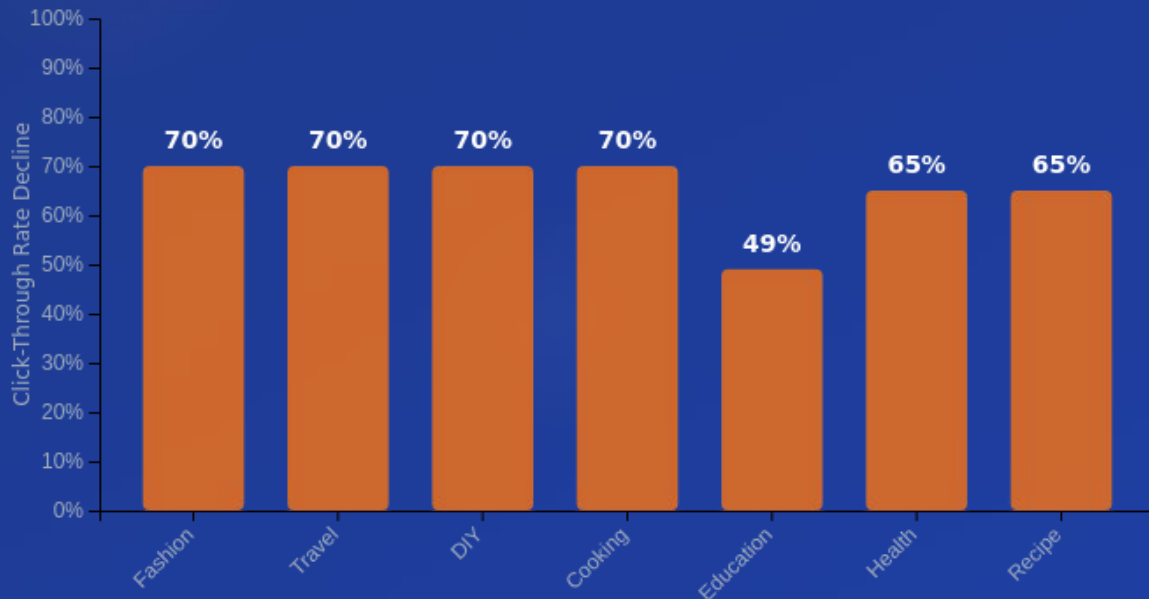- May 2024: 56%
- May 2025: 69%

Source: NY Post (Jul 3, 2025)

# CTR Decline Across Industries

AIO's presence has led to significant CTR declines across various industries, with some experiencing up to 70% traffic loss.

## Industry-Specific CTR Decline (%)



## Key Industry Impacts

👕 **Fashion, Travel, DIY, Cooking**
Experienced up to 70% traffic decline

🎓 **Education Sector**
Chegg reported 49% decline in non-subscriber traffic

💗 **Health & Recipe Content**
Small bloggers lost up to 65% of top-page traffic

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📈 **Average CTR Decline**
**34.5%**   lower for top-ranking pages

🔑 **AIO-Triggered Keywords**
**15.49%**   average CTR decline

🏆 **Position #1 CTR (Informational)**
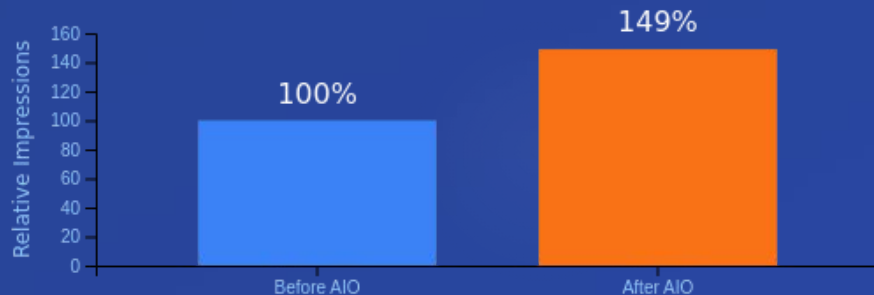Dropped from **5.6%** to **3.1%**

# User Behavior Shifts
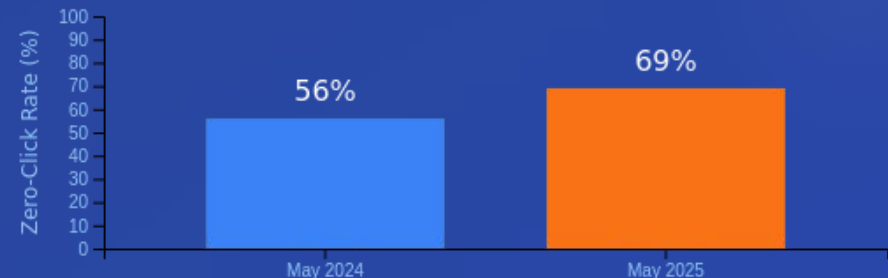
## ⇄ A Fundamental Shift in Search Behavior

Users are increasingly satisfied with top-layer summaries provided by AIO and less inclined to visit individual websites unless they require more extensive details or a trusted source.

### 📈 Total Search Impressions



149%

100%

Relative Impressions

160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0

Before AIO        After AIO

ⓘ Source: BrightEdge (May 14, 2025)

### ▸ Zero-Click Searches Growth



56%        69%

Zero-Click Rate (%)

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

May 2024        May 2025

ⓘ Source: NY Post (Jul 3, 2025)

### ▤ Top-of-Page Focus

Users are engaging more deeply within the SERP itself rather than using it as a simple

### 👁 New Value of Impressions

While fewer clicks may be generated, visibility within the AIO itself becomes a new

### 🔍 Complex Query Focus

People are using search for more complex, multi-faceted queries that AIO is designed to

# Strategies to Improve CTR

In the AIO era, traditional strategies need adaptation. Even being cited in an AIO doesn't guarantee clicks. These approaches can help improve visibility and engagement:

## Focus on High-Value Content

Create content that AIOs cannot easily replicate or condense. This includes in-depth reviews, unique data studies, competitor comparisons, and interactive tools requiring user engagement.

## Strengthen Branded Search

AIOs appear less frequently for branded keywords. Build a strong brand that encourages direct searches. Cultivate one-to-one relationships through email, social media, and other platforms.

## Optimize "Click-Worthy" Snippets

While AIOs dominate, traditional organic listings still exist. Optimize page titles, meta descriptions, and content to be compelling, signaling that more valuable information is available on the page.

## Target Niche Keywords

Aim for niches where users seek human interpretation or deeper analysis. These queries may have lower search volume but yield higher-quality traffic. Focus on question-based queries that require expert insights.
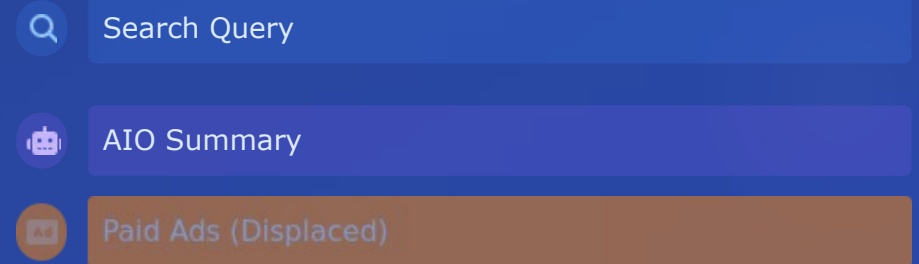
# PPC Disruption: Ad Visibility and Placement

## ⚠️ Traditional Ad Displacement

### 🅰️ Before AIO Era

🔍 Search Query

☰ Organic Results

🅰️ Paid Ads

### 🤖 After AIO Introduction

🔍 Search Query

🤖 AIO Summary

🅰️ Paid Ads (Displaced)

## 💡 New Opportunities for Contextual Advertising

### 📄 Ads Within AIOs

Google now integrates ads directly within, above, and below AIOs, creating highly contextual placement opportunities.

### 🎯 Query & Content Matching

Ads are matched not only to the user's query but also to the content of the AI-generated summary, creating more relevant ad experiences.

### 📈 Performance Reporting

Integrated ads are considered "Top Ads" in performance reporting, though advertisers cannot specifically target this placement.

# CPC and Bidding Strategy Evolution

## 📈 CPC & CTR Impact

CPC & CTR Comparison: With vs. Without AIO
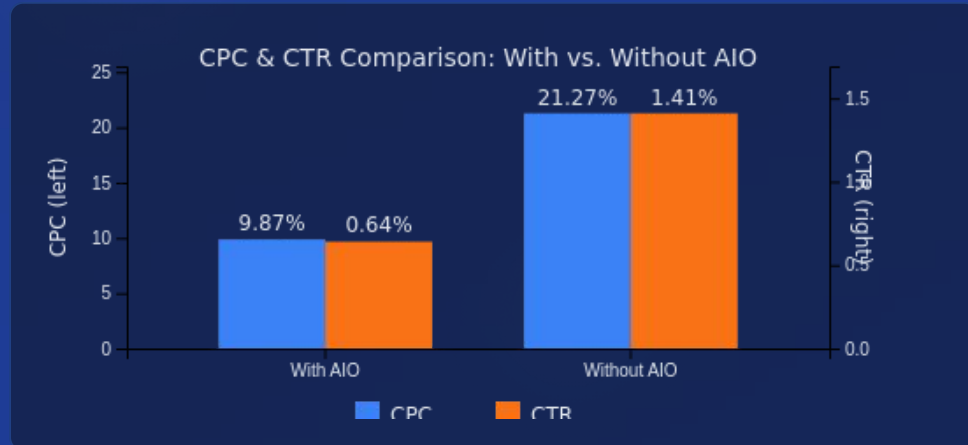


**⚠ Key Observations**

> With AIOs reducing available ad slots, competition for high-visibility placements has intensified

> 58.5% of U.S. Google searches in 2024 ended without a click, affecting overall CPC

## ⚙ Strategic Bidding Adjustments

**🛡 Protecting Brand Terms**
Advertisers increasing budgets for branded keywords by up to 20% to defend position alongside brand-related AIOs

**🤖 AI-Powered Bidding**
Leveraging Smart Bidding strategies like Target CPA and Target ROAS to adapt to fluctuating ad inventory and user intent signals

**Expanded Targeting**
Utilizing broad match and keywordless technologies to appear within AIOs, as ad relevance is determined by the AIO's content

# New Ad Formats and Opportunities

## 🧩 Contextual Ads in AIOs

Ads appear within AI-generated summaries, allowing brands to connect with users during new exploration moments.

> 💡 Example: A search for "why is my pool green" might trigger an AIO about water testing, creating an opportunity for a "pool vacuum cleaners" ad.

## 🚦 AI Referral Traffic

A new traffic source emerging in analytics platforms like GA4, with referrals from domains like gemini.google.com.

> Marketers can create custom channel groups to track engagement and conversion value of this highly-primed audience.

## 💬 AI Mode Advertising

Google is testing ads within its fully conversational "AI Mode," where users ask questions twice as long as traditional queries.

> 📈 This provides richer context for precise ad targeting and creates new opportunities for brands.

## 💲 Monetization Opportunities

Google claims AIOs monetize at the same rate as traditional search, creating new revenue streams for advertisers.

> ✅ Integrated ads within AIOs are considered "Top Ads" in performance reporting placement
>
> ℹ️ Advertisers cannot specifically target this placement

# PPC Campaign Optimization Tactics

## Embrace AI-Driven Campaigns

- Fully utilize AI-powered tools like Performance Max, Smart Bidding, and broad match
- Interpret complex, conversational queries that trigger AIOs

## Refine Keyword Strategy

- Shift focus toward bottom-of-funnel, high-commercial-intent keywords
- Test longer, question-based keywords to capture conversational search patterns

## Enhance Ad Creative and Feeds

- Use AI tools to generate adaptive ad copy that aligns with conversational queries
- Maintain high-quality, detailed product feeds crucial for

## Foster SEO and PPC Collaboration

- Break down silos between SEO and PPC teams
- SEO efforts can focus on getting content cited in AIOs, creating "brand effect"
- PPC can capture high-intent, bottom-of-funnel queries AIOs don't resolve

## Re-evaluate KPIs and Diversify

- Move beyond traditional CTR and conversion metrics
- Analyze on-SERP visibility, impression share, and AI referral traffic
- Diversify ad spend across social media, retail media networks, and video platforms

## 💡 Key Takeaway

In the AIO era, PPC campaigns must become more dynamic and integrated with SEO strategies. Success requires adapting to

# Future Trends in AI Search

As Google AI Overviews (AIO) reshape search, several key developments will further influence search marketing:

## ● Query Evolution

### Longer, Conversational Queries
AI Mode queries are twice as long as traditional searches, creating new opportunities for precise targeting.

### Expanded AIO Coverage
Google will increase AIO prevalence across more queries and markets, changing the search landscape.

## ● Ad Integration

### Deeper Ad Integration
Ads will appear more prominently within AIOs, creating sophisticated new placement opportunities.

### Contextual Ad Targeting
Advertisers will gain more control over ad placement within AIOs, enabling hyper-targeted campaigns.

## ● Strategic Adaptations

### Generative Engine Optimization
A new discipline called "AI SEO" will emerge, focusing on optimizing content for AI-generated answers.

### AI-Powered Tools
Google will continue to push automated solutions like "AI Max for search" to handle conversational queries.

Adnan Hameed

adnanhameed.com

# Cross-Channel Marketing Strategies

With AIO reducing traditional search traffic, diversifying marketing efforts is essential to maintain visibility and reach audiences across the digital ecosystem.

Search · · · Social · · · Connected TV · · · Native Ads · · · Email

## Diversify Advertising Spend

- ✓ Reallocate budgets to native advertising
- ✓ Explore connected TV opportunities
- ✓ Expand social media presence

## Build First-Party Data

- ✓ Capture email lists directly
- ✓ Develop loyalty programs
- ✓ Build audience through content

## Leverage AI Referral Traffic

- ✓ Create custom channel groups in GA4
- ✓ Track engagement from AIO citations
- ✓ Develop content for AI referral traffic

## 💡 Implementation Best Practices

◎ Coordinate messaging across channels to create a cohesive

📈 Establish KPIs that measure overall marketing effectiveness,

# Balancing SEO and PPC

Creating synergy between organic and paid strategies in the AIO era

## SEO Strategy

### 🤝 Strategic Collaboration

SEO efforts should focus on achieving brand visibility and trust by getting content cited in AIOs, creating "social proof" that benefits paid ads.

### 🗄 Structured Data Optimization

Implement specific schema types like `FAQPage`, `HowTo`, and `Article` to help AI parse your information and feature it in relevant summaries.

### 👑 E-E-A-T Focus

Build topical authority by consistently publishing expert-level content. Showcasing author credentials and building brand reputation signals expertise to Google.

Creating synergistic advantage

## PPC Strategy

### 🔽 High-Intent Keywords

PPC campaigns should pivot towards commercial-ready, long-tail keywords that signal immediate purchase intent, which AIOs are less likely to resolve directly.

### 🤖 AI-Powered Tools

Utilize Google's AI-powered solutions like Performance Max, broad match, and smart bidding to adapt to conversational search behavior and match ads to user intent.

### 📈 Cross-Team Collaboration

Ensure SEO, PPC, and PR teams work together. If the SEO team identifies a competitor ranking in an AIO, the PPC team can adjust bidding strategies

# Action Plan: Thriving with AIO

To succeed in the AI search landscape, businesses must adapt their strategies. Here's a comprehensive action plan:

### 📈 Re-evaluate KPIs
- ✅ Focus on impression share and visibility
- ✅ Track AI referral traffic quality

### 🤖 AI-powered Tools
- ✅ Use Performance Max and smart bidding
- ⚠️ Verify AI-generated recommendations

### 💵 Strategic Budget Allocation
- ✅ Invest in AIO tracking tools
- ✅ Adjust for changing query costs

### 🔄 Agile Budgeting Process
- ✅ Implement quarterly budget reviews
- ✅ Allocate budget based on performance

### 👥 Cross-team Collaboration
- ✅ SEO and PPC teams should work together
- ✅ Combine organic and paid strategies

### 📄 Content Strategy Evolution
- ✅ Focus on in-depth, high-quality content
- ✅ Structure for readability and AI parsing