MONICA ACADEMY · EPISODE 1 · AI SEARCH (AEO)

Why does ChatGPT recommend your competitor and not you?

Run Granola's nine-step AI search playbook on your own business: find the buyer questions you lose in ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude and Google's AI Mode, find out why, and fix only what's missing.

The episode, the downloads and the copy buttons: immonica.com/academy/ai-search

THE CASE

What Granola got from this system.

Figures from Discovered Labs' case study with Granola (2026). In Granola's words: “It's become one of our main channels.”

AI search

+4,600% monthly activated users from AI search

New users who found Granola through AI answers reached 47 times January's level.

Citations

+558% non-branded AI citation rate

Cited more often on questions that don't name Granola: the ones buyers ask before they know you.

Google

+134% organic sessions

The same work also grew classic search traffic.

THE NINE STEPS

Find what's missing, fix only that, measure.

Each step: what it replaces, and the rule to keep.

1

1 · Start with buyer decisions

Replaces exporting a thousand keywords from a tool. Rule: every decision keeps the source it came from (a review, a sales call, a forum thread).

2

2 · Write every decision twice

Once as a Google search, once as a question for an AI. Rule: an AI question carries a situation, a condition and sometimes a comparison.

3

3 · Measure each engine separately

Replaces checking your Google rank and assuming the AI agrees. Rule: one answer is a snapshot, not a position. Run each question more than once.

4

4 · Diagnose before you create

Replaces “we're not showing up, let's write another article.” Rule: find the why before you decide the what.

5

5 · Missing page or weak page

Replaces publishing an article that competes with your own page. Rule: if a page exists, improve it. Create one only when nothing exists.

6

6 · Technical fixes where there's demand

Replaces cleaning every warning on the site. Rule: one issue on a page that answers a buying question beats a hundred warnings elsewhere.

7

7 · Study the sources the AI trusts

Replaces chasing more links. Rule: find which sources build the answer, and how you look in each one.

8

8 · One action per source

Own, Claim, Earn or Contest. Rule: different source, different action.

9

9 · One change, then ask again

Re-run the same questions and watch two things: do you show up more, and do more users arrive. Keep what moves. Drop what doesn't.

STEPS 1 TO 3 · THE TRACKER

Ten decisions, four engines, one sheet.

One row per buyer decision, one column per engine. **Cited**: the answer links to your site. **Mentioned**: it names you without a link. **Absent**: it doesn't name you. This is Granola's real run, from November 25, 2026.

#	BUYER DECISION	CHATGPT	PERPLEXITY	CLAUDE	AI MODE
1	Does a bot join the call?	Cited	Mentioned	Cited	Mentioned
2	Zoom, Teams and Meet	Cited	Absent	Absent	Mentioned
3	My computer, my phone, in person	Cited	Cited	Cited	Cited
4	Does it always record?	Cited	Mentioned	Mentioned	Cited
5	Notes into HubSpot and Slack	Absent	Absent	Absent	Cited
6	Summaries and action items	Cited	Mentioned	Mentioned	Cited
7	Who said what	Mentioned	Absent	Absent	Cited
8	Price and history	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mentioned	Cited
9	Privacy and consent	Cited	Mentioned	Cited	Mentioned
10	Admin controls for the team	Absent	Absent	Cited	Cited

Totals: cited 18, mentioned 13, absent 9. Run the same question again on the same day and the answer can change: on question 5, three of the four engines changed. In eight runs of that question, Granola was never the recommendation.

Question 5, as a buyer asks an AI

> I'm a founder and I want notes from every sales call to land in HubSpot and Slack automatically. Is Fireflies the best option, or is there something better?

NAMED INSTEAD

Who the AI picked

ChatGPT: Fireflies, Fathom and Avoma. Perplexity: Fireflies, Fathom and Scribbl. Claude: Fireflies, Fathom, Avoma and others. Google's AI Mode was the only one that cited Granola.

STEP 4 · THE FOUR CAUSES

Why you lose a question.

Pick one cause, with evidence, before you write anything. For Granola's question 5 it was cause 4: Perplexity's ten sources and the more than sixty pages ChatGPT read didn't include a single page from granola.ai.

Cause 1

No page

Nothing on your site answers the question.

Cause 2

Weak page

The page exists, but answers it badly.

Cause 3

Technical

Something stops the AI from reading it.

Cause 4

Third-party sources

The AI builds the answer from other sites, where you barely appear.

STEPS 5 AND 6 · THE CHECKLIST

Check the page, then the plumbing.

Granola has at least nine pages about HubSpot, so its page wasn't missing. Its integration page had a clean structure, but 345 words, no price, and no mention of Slack or sales calls: exactly what this buyer asked about.

STEP 5 · FOUR THINGS AN AI NEEDS

The page check

1. A clear answer at the top. 2. Facts it can verify: prices, plans, numbers, integrations. 3. A clean structure: headings, short sections, lists. 4. A current date.

STEP 6 · THREE QUICK CHECKS

The technical check

1. Your robots.txt doesn't block AI crawlers. 2. The page is indexed in Google. 3. It loads fast. Granola's robots.txt allows every crawler, so cause 3 was ruled out.

STEPS 7 AND 8 · OWN, CLAIM, EARN, CONTEST

Every source gets one action.

Open the sources the AI cites for the question you lose. For each one, write down whether you appear, appear wrong, or don't appear at all. Then give it one of four actions. These are Granola's, from the real sources behind question 5.

Own

Pages you control

Improve them. Granola: its HubSpot page needs a section on sales calls, Slack and price.

Claim

Profiles and listings

Claim them and keep them complete and current. Granola: its HubSpot Marketplace listing, with 8,000 installs.

Earn

Articles, reviews, conversations

You have to deserve them. Granola: a real answer in the HubSpot community thread, where the accepted answer is Fireflies and Fathom.

Contest

Old or wrong information

Ask for a correction. Granola: HubSpot's notetaker list ranks it ninth of nine and says “no Windows support.” Granola runs on Mac, Windows, iOS and Android.

Reddit, carefully: Granola moved its Reddit work to the communities closest to its product, joined only conversations that matched the questions it measured, and said who it was. Read a community before you post in it.

MAKE IT YOURS

The exact prompts for Claude, step by step.

Swap the parts in [brackets] for your own. Each prompt works in Claude, ChatGPT or any assistant that can read what you paste.

1 · Buyer decisions

> Here are my reviews, customer emails and sales notes: [paste them]. List the 10 decisions buyers repeat most before choosing a product like mine. For each decision, give the source it came from. Leave out usernames.

2 · Every decision, twice

> For each of these decisions: [paste them]. Write it once as a Google search and once as a question a buyer would ask an AI, with their situation and their condition. Add one question that compares me with [main competitor].

3 · The tracker

> I ran these questions in ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude and Google's AI Mode: [paste the answers and their sources]. For each answer, mark me as cited (links to my site), mentioned (names me without a link) or absent, and list who it named instead.

4 · The diagnosis

> Here's the question: [question]. Here's the AI's answer and its sources: [paste them]. Here's my page: [URL or text]. Pick one of four causes: no page, weak page, technical problem, or the answer comes from third-party sources. Show me the evidence.

5 · The page check

> Score my page [URL or text] for this question: [question]. Check four things: a clear answer at the top, facts an AI can verify, a clean structure, and a current date. For each one, give me the exact sentence you would change.

6 · The technical check

> Here's my robots.txt: [paste it]. And my key pages: [URLs]. Tell me what is blocked for AI crawlers, and which fix comes first for the pages that answer buying questions.

7 · The sources

> These are the sources the AI cited for [question]: [paste the links and what each one says]. For each source, tell me whether I appear, appear with wrong information, or don't appear at all.

8 · One action per source

> Put each of these sources in Own (my pages), Claim (profiles and listings), Earn (articles, reviews, conversations) or Contest (old or wrong information): [paste the list]. Give one concrete action for each.

9 · Every Monday

> Here's this week's tracker and last week's: [paste both]. Which question moved, in which engine, and which change most likely did it?

To count users who arrive from AI answers, open Google Analytics and look at the sessions coming from chatgpt.com, perplexity.ai and claude.ai.

Start with steps 1, 2 and 3.

Ten questions and one sheet tell you where you stand. Granola didn't win AI search by publishing more. It won by knowing exactly what was missing.