

# AI Discoverability Checklist for Startups

A Comprehensive Checklist to Get Cited, Discovered & Convert

## How To Use This Checklist

This comprehensive audit framework is designed to help startups evaluate and improve their visibility in AI search engines (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, Claude, etc.).

### Scoring System (0-2 Scale):

- **0 = Missing:** Not present or completely unoptimized.
- **1 = Partial:** Present but inconsistent, incomplete, or not applied across key pages.
- **2 = Implemented:** Fully deployed, validated, and optimized.

### Key Definitions:

- **Total Possible Score:** 120 points
- **Priority:** Indicates implementation urgency (Critical / Important / Nice-to-Have).
- **Stage:** Recommended growth stage for implementation (Foundation / Building / Growth).

*Calculate your total score after completing all sections to determine your AI Discoverability Maturity Level using the table below.*

## Score Tracker & Maturity Levels

Score Range	Maturity Level	Status	Action Required
0 - 30	Foundation	Critical Risk	Immediate AI visibility gaps; start with Critical priorities to establish baseline presence.
31 - 60	Building	Moderate Risk	Core foundations present; expand coverage and consistency across all assets.
61 - 90	Growth	Low Risk	Strong AI presence; optimize for citation frequency and conversion pathways.
91 - 120	AI-Ready	Best Practice	Industry-leading visibility; maintain monitoring and innovate with new formats.

### My AI Maturity Score

1. Entity & Brand Foundations (Max 20) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Technical Access & Crawl Readiness (Max 20) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Structured Understanding Signals (Max 20) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Content for Extraction & Citations (Max 24) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Authority & Distribution (Max 20) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Measurement & Conversion (Max 16) \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL SCORE (Max 120):** \_\_\_\_\_ / 120

**My Maturity Level:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Entity & Brand Foundations (10 Items)

Goal: Establish a clear, unambiguous brand identity that AI models can recognize and retrieve.

- **Google Knowledge Panel is claimed or actively influencing Knowledge Graph.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Consistent NAP (Name, Address, Phone) across website, socials, and directories.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **About Us page clearly defines mission, history, and unique value proposition.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Team/Founder pages include detailed expertise signals (bios, credentials, links).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Organization Schema markup is implemented on the homepage.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Brand messaging and tagline are consistent across all owned channels (LinkedIn, X, etc.).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Wikipedia page exists or Wikidata entry is created and verified.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Active monitoring of brand mentions using alerts (e.g., Google Alerts, Wellows).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Press and media coverage section established on the website (digital PR).**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Awards, certifications, and recognition clearly displayed with verification links.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Technical Access & Crawl Readiness (10 Items)

Goal: Ensure AI bots can access, render, and index your content without technical barriers.

- **Robots.txt explicitly allows GPTBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot, and CCBot.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **XML Sitemap is valid, up-to-date, and submitted to Search Console/Bing Webmaster.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Google-Extended is NOT blocked (ensures visibility in Gemini/Bard).**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Site is fully secured with HTTPS/SSL certificates (no mixed content errors).**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Mobile-responsive design is verified (Google Mobile-Friendly Test).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Core Web Vitals pass assessment (LCP, FID, CLS) for fast rendering.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Clean semantic HTML structure (proper H1-H6 hierarchy) used on all pages.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **No critical resources (CSS/JS) blocked from crawling.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Internal linking structure uses descriptive anchor text (context for AI).**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Regular monitoring for 404s and crawl errors implemented.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Structured Understanding Signals (10 Items)

Goal: Speak the native language of AI models using Schema.org vocabulary.

- **JSON-LD format is used for all structured data implementation.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Article Schema implemented on all blog posts and news items.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Product or Service Schema implemented on key offering pages.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **FAQ Schema used on pages with Q&A sections (boosts direct answer potential).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Breadcrumb Schema implemented for clear site structure understanding.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Author Schema links content creators to their profiles/expertise.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **HowTo Schema applied to tutorial or instructional content.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **All Schema validated using Google Rich Results Test (zero errors).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **SameAs properties used in Schema to link to social profiles/Wikipedia.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Regular quarterly audits of structured data health.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Content for Extraction & Citations (12 Items)

Goal: Format content so AI models can easily parse, extract, and attribute it.

- **"Direct Answer" paragraphs (40-60 words) placed at the top of key pages.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Headings (H2/H3) formatted as direct questions (e.g., "What is X?").**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Statistics and data points are clearly cited with sources and dates.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Summary boxes or "Key Takeaways" included at start or end of articles.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Expert quotes and testimonials used to reinforce E-E-A-T.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Comparison tables provided for product/feature evaluations.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Lists (ordered/unordered) used frequently for steps, features, or benefits.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Content written in a conversational, authoritative, and jargon-free tone.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **TL;DR (Too Long; Didn't Read) sections provided for long-form content.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Original research or proprietary data included to encourage unique citations.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Content includes "Last Updated" timestamp visible to users and bots.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Internal links connect related topics to build semantic authority clusters.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Authority & Distribution (10 Items)

Goal: Build trust signals outside your website where AI models also learn.

- **Active presence on Reddit/Quora answering industry questions.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Content repurposed on platforms LLMs trust (Medium, LinkedIn Pulse).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Consistent posting schedule maintained (freshness signal).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Guest posts secured on high-authority, relevant industry sites.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Backlinks earned from authoritative domains (universities, news, etc.).**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Listings claimed on key industry directories and review sites (G2, Capterra).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **YouTube presence established (video transcripts are crawled by AI).**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Participation in expert roundups or interviews.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Case studies published demonstrating real-world results/expertise.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Active community engagement (responding to comments/discussions).**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Measurement & Conversion (8 Items)

Goal: Track visibility and ensure AI traffic turns into business value.

- **GA4 configured to track referral traffic from AI sources.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Clear CTAs (Call to Action) placed above the fold for quick conversion.**  
PRIORITY: CRITICAL | STAGE: FOUNDATION | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Regular manual testing of brand queries in ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Fast page load speeds maintained (prevents bounce from AI referrals).**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Lead capture forms optimized for friction-free conversion.**  
PRIORITY: IMPORTANT | STAGE: BUILDING | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Monitoring of brand sentiment in AI-generated responses.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Conversion tracking specifically set up for AI-sourced visitors.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- **Monthly reporting on AI visibility trends established.**  
PRIORITY: NICE-TO-HAVE | STAGE: GROWTH | Score (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_