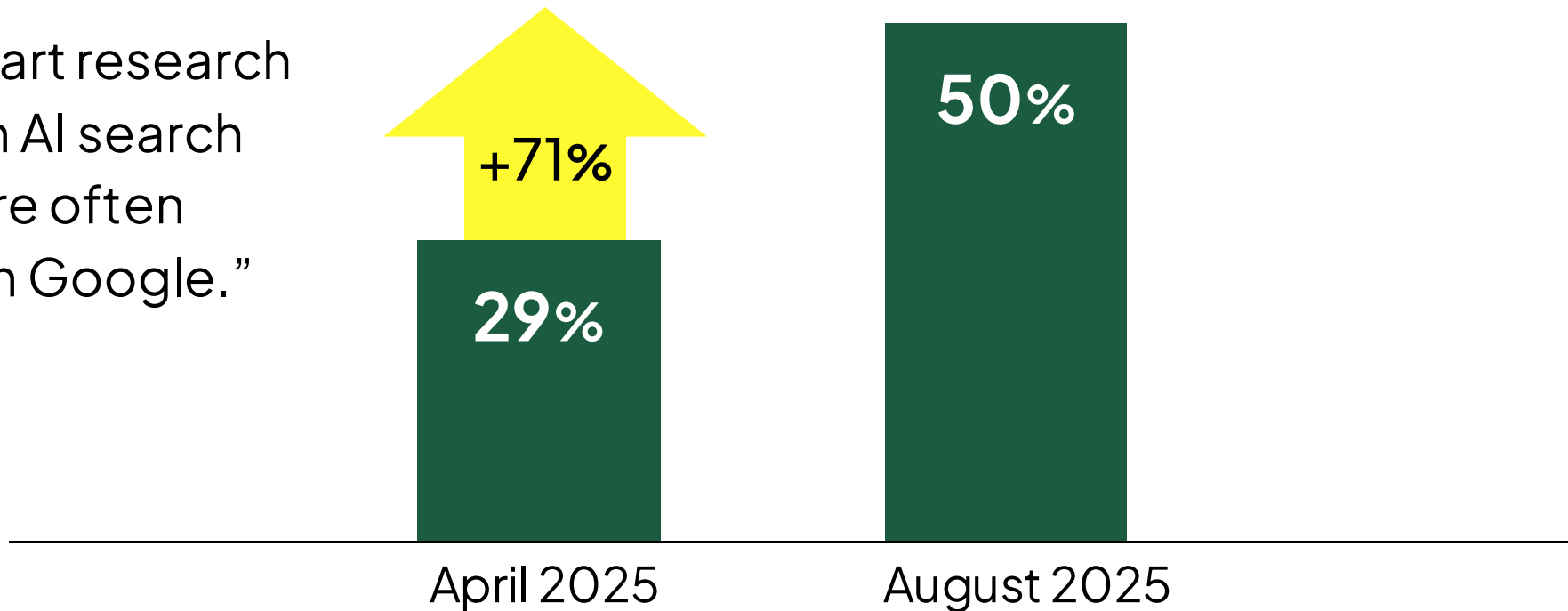# How to win #AEO

Sydney Sloan
G2

SCALE

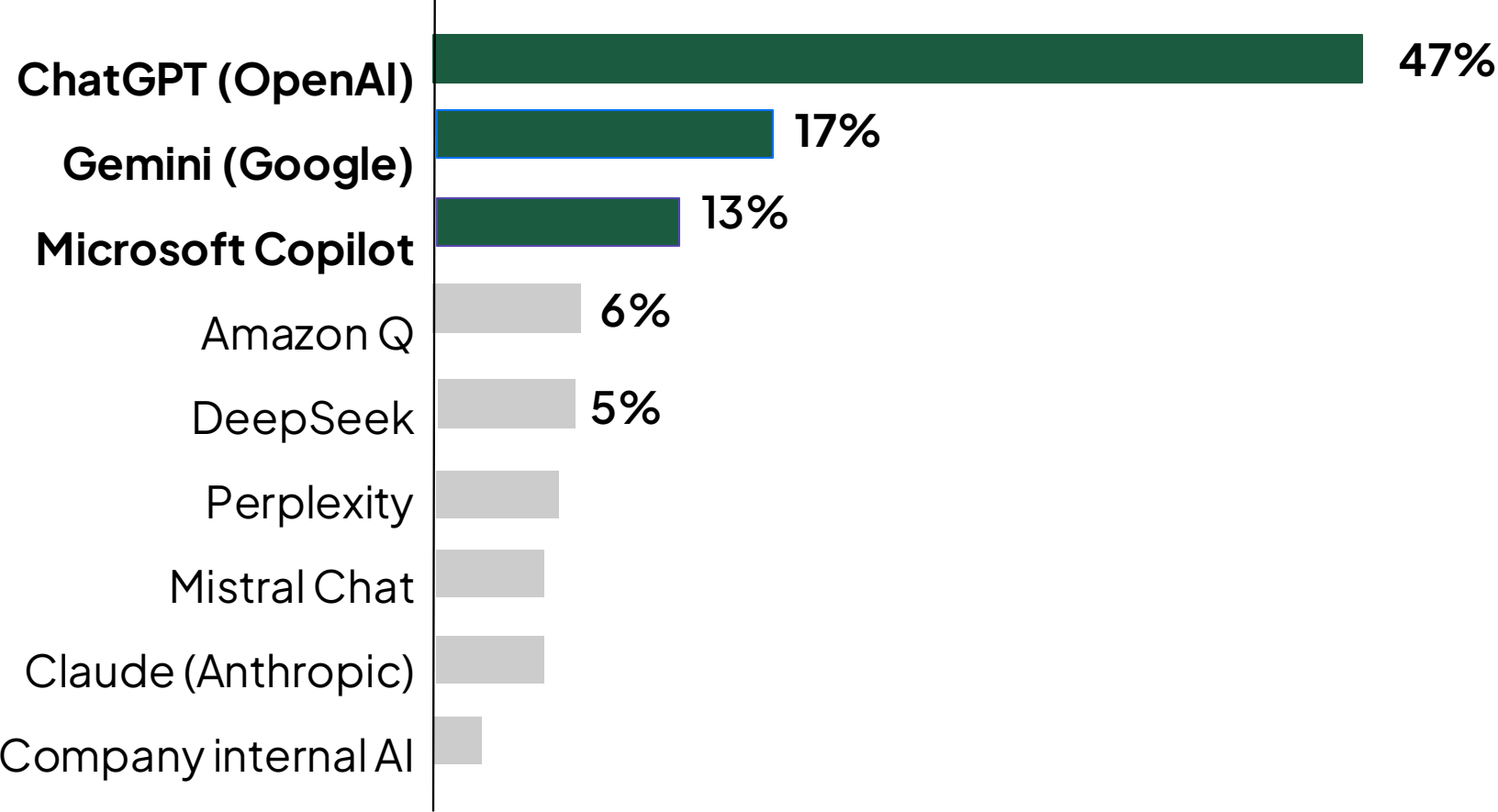# AI has disrupted the B2B software buying journey.

50%

of B2B software buyers now start research with AI search more often than Google.

Buyers have accelerated AI search usage drastically in just 4 months

"I start research with AI search more often than Google."

+71%

29%

50%

April 2025

August 2025

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ChatGPT is most popular AI chatbot for B2B software research, by nearly 3x any other LLM

ChatGPT (OpenAI)	47%
Gemini (Google)	17%
Microsoft Copilot	13%
Amazon Q	6%
DeepSeek	5%
Perplexity	
Mistral Chat	
Claude (Anthropic)	
Company internal AI	

Source: G2 August 2025 Survey

How can you adapt?
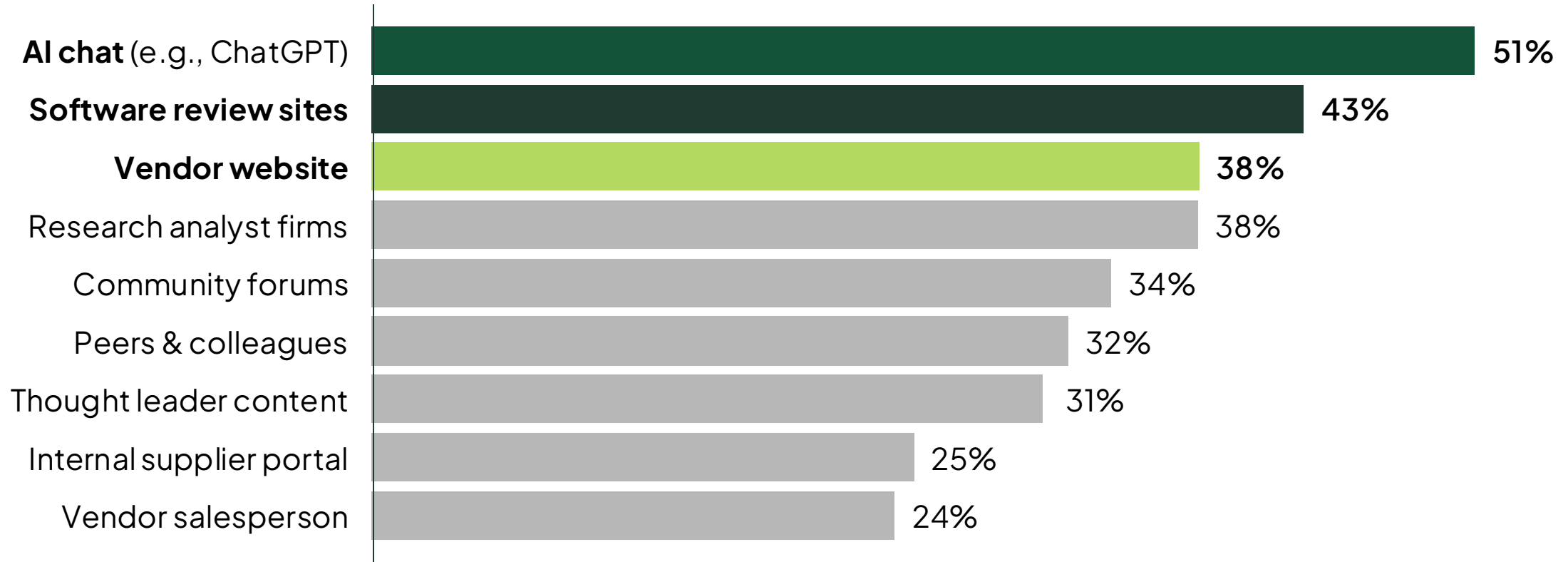
Recommendation #1
Build your brand where your users live.

Why?

1. Less traffic coming from PPC / SEO

2. LLMs are the new front door to buyers

3. Buyers rely on reviews, now surfaced by AI

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AI chatbots are #1 source software buyers use to create shortlists & review sites are #2

Source	Percentage
AI chat (e.g., ChatGPT)	51%
Software review sites	43%
Vendor website	38%
Research analyst firms	38%
Community forums	34%
Peers & colleagues	32%
Thought leader content	31%
Internal supplier portal	25%
Vendor salesperson	24%

Source: G2 August 2025 Survey

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User-Generated Content is fueling LLMs

Top Sources: Digital Technology & Software

ChatGPT		Google AI Mode	
Domain	**Source (%)**	**Domain**	**Source (%)**
wikipedia.org	167.08%	zapier.com	21.18%
reddit.com	121.88%	medium.com	19.21%
techradar.com	59.71%	linkedin.com	18.78%
g2.com	20.04%	thedigitalprojectmanager.com	17.90%
medium.com	15.75%	thectoclub.com	17.03%
umatechnology.org	13.29%	g2.com	15.72%
expertinsights.com	13.09%	expertinsights.com	13.54%
forbes.com	11.66%	google.com	12.45%
clickup.com	11.04%	microsoft.com	11.57%
gartner.com	10.43%	youtube.com	9.83%

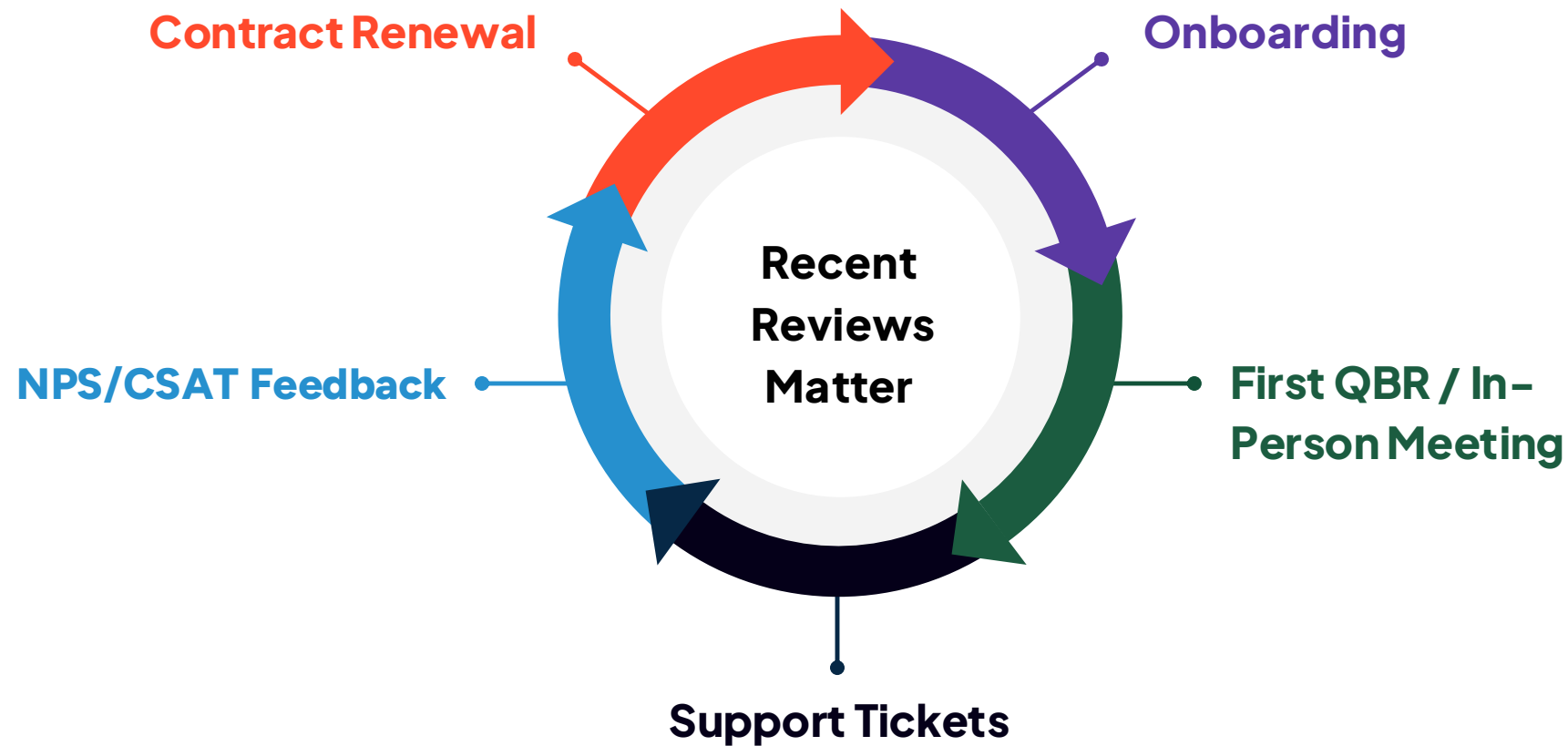Source: AI Visibility Index Study by Semrush Enterprise, data collected Aug. 2025 https://ai-visibility-index.semrush.com/

G2 has the highest influence for software-related queries

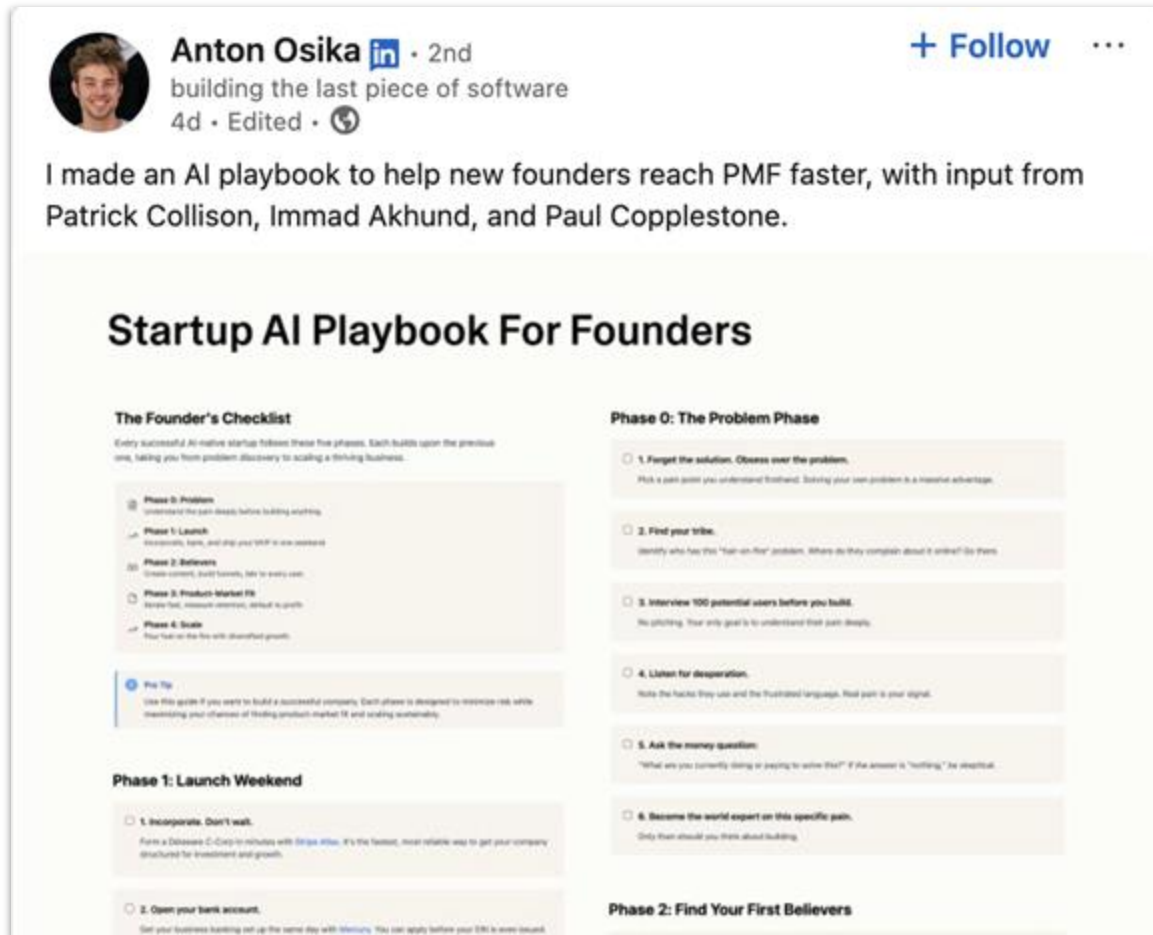**Top cited sources for SaaS-related searches on ChatGPT, Perplexity, & Google AIO**
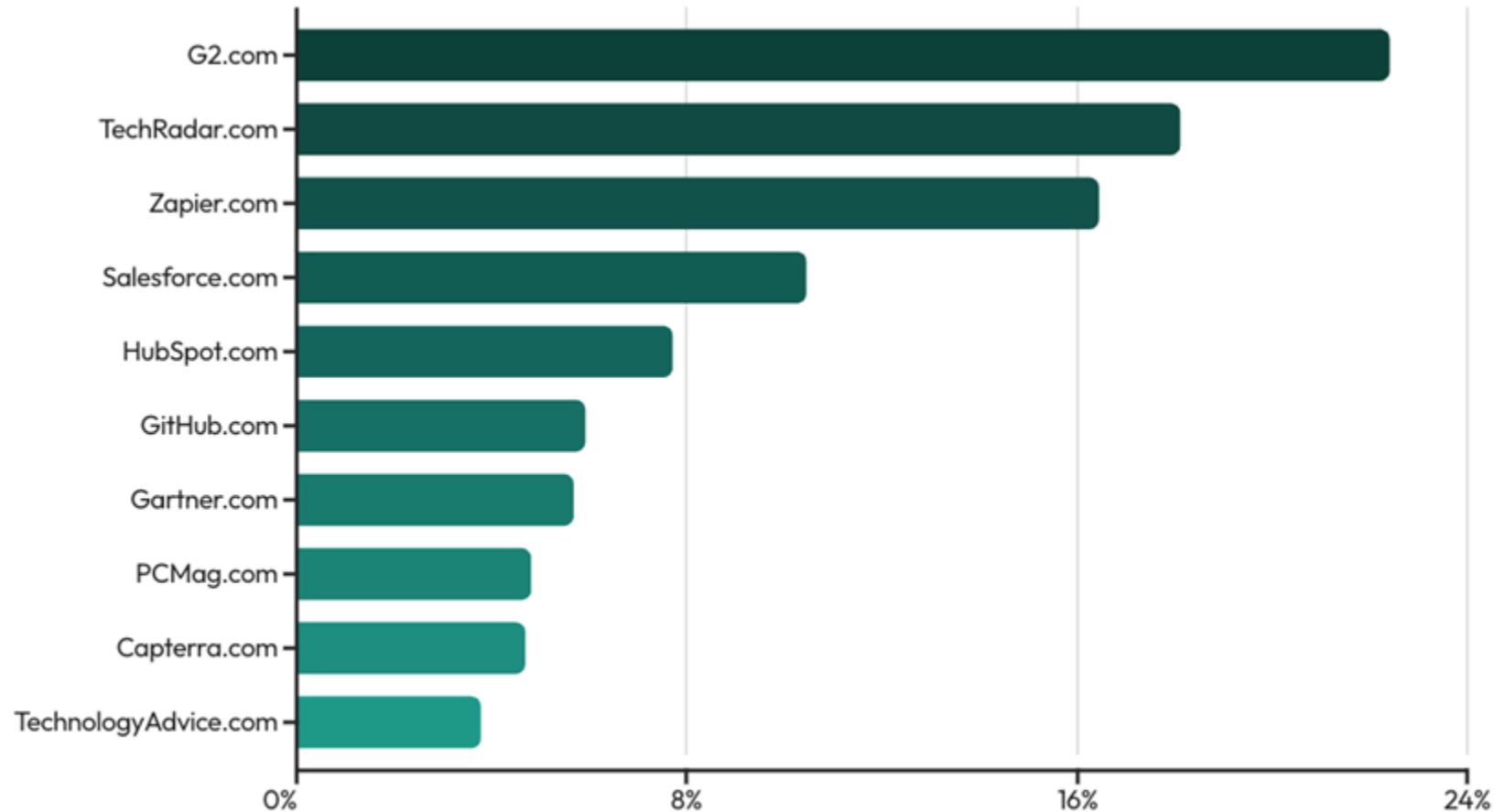
Data excludes Reddit, Wikipedia and Youtube

Source: Radix AI

How to do it: Generate reviews throughout the customer lifecycle

Contract Renewal

Onboarding

Recent Reviews Matter

First QBR / In-Person Meeting

NPS/CSAT Feedback

Support Tickets

How to do it: Leverage influencers and invest in your #founderbrand
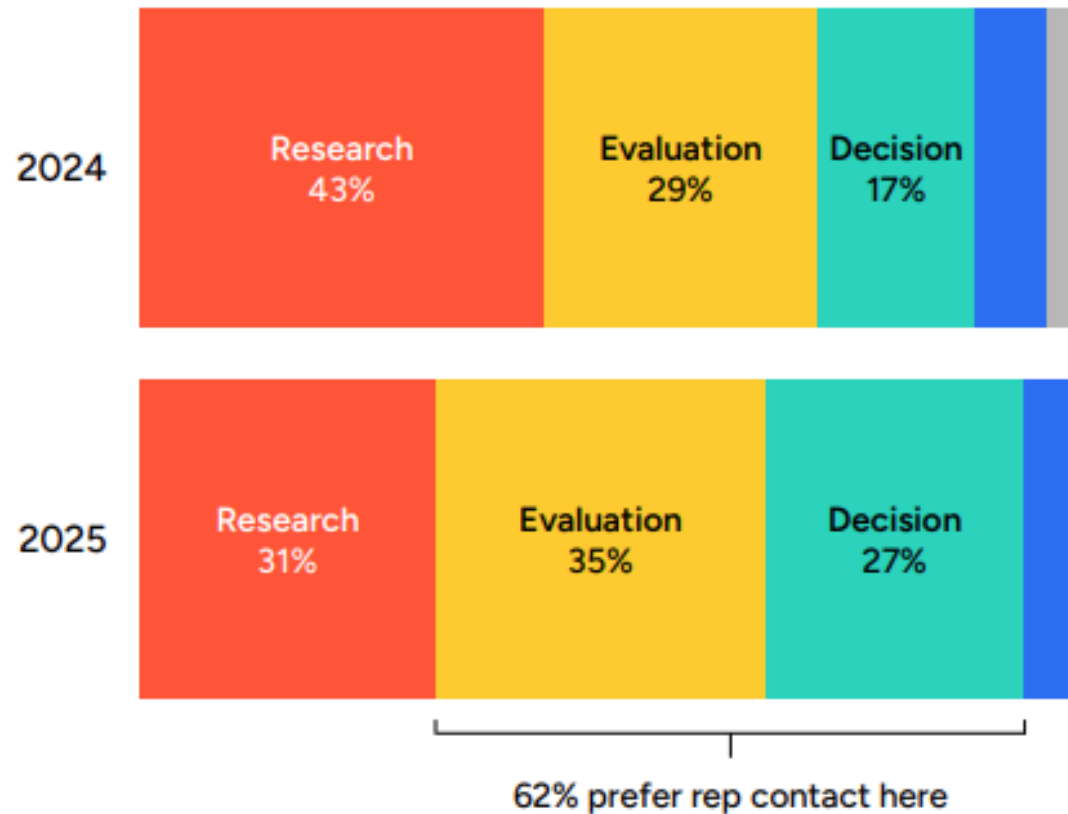
- Post from personal accounts

- Engagement in first 5 minutes

- Like + comment (more than 8 words)

- Repost (but not w/ your thoughts)

- If you tag others they must respond (or it counts against you!)

SCALE

Recommendation #2
## Create a new strategy for your content.

Why? AI is accelerating the rise of self-serve research & buying

**Nearly 2/3** prefer sales contact in the later stages of the buying journey, +17 ppt YoY

2024 — Research 43% | Evaluation 29% | Decision 17%

2025 — Research 31% | Evaluation 35% | Decision 27%

62% prefer rep contact here

2024 results re-weighted to remove "Discovery". If all Discovery answers are instead added to Research, Evaluation + Decisions still rise > 25% YoY.

Source: G2 2024 + 2025 Buyer Behavior Reports

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Conversational prompts are the new keywords, so write for 'jobs to be done'

Performance Management Software

Search volume ⓘ

7.3K

Growth +14% · Forecast −58%

17K

Sep 2015   Mar 2026   0
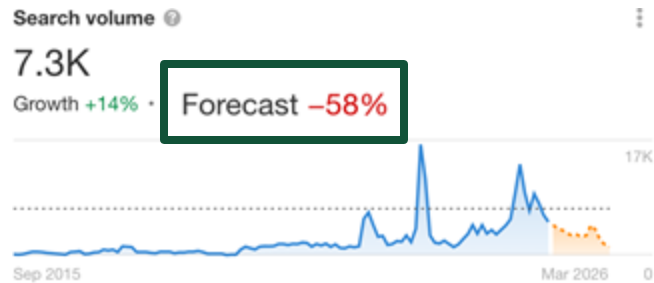
- *Which performance management software do big tech firms use?*
- *Top rated performance review apps for software companies*
- *Which is the best performance management solution for a mid-sized IT firm?*
- *Best performance management system for service based companies*
- *Reliable performance review tools for app developers*
- *Best-rated employee review platform for software industry*

Video Conferencing Software

Search volume ⓘ

700

Growth −11% · Forecast −35%

10K

Sep 2015   Mar 2026   0
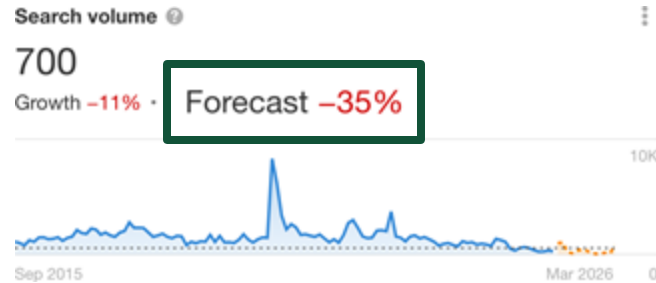
- *Best rated video calling software for international communication*
- *Most reliable video meeting service for large companies*
- *Affordable video conferencing platform with great audio*
- *Which video call software is best for customer meetings?*
- *Best video conferencing app for SMBs*
- *Recommended video conferencing tools for startups*
- *Best desktop video conferencing software*

Cybersecurity Software

Search volume ⓘ

1.6K

Growth +15% · Forecast −43%

3.2K

Sep 2015   Mar 2026   0

- *Best app for managing security compliance in our startup*
- *What's the best security compliance solution for my tech firm?*
- *Best security compliance tools for SaaS*
- *What's the best security compliance software for ensuring data protection?*
- *Most recommended security compliance software for corporate use*
- *Best rated security compliance service for IT*
- *Best security compliance software for SMB*
- *Top rate compliance app for office security*

How to do it: Content for persona jobs to be done

- **Build out your Agentic personas**
  - One for each profile that is constantly learning
  - Map out jobs to be done
  - Integrate them into your content publishing workflows

- **Be where your buyers live and build what LLMs use**
  - Buy an #AEO platform
  - Understand citation channels that feed LLMs and create content strategy to "fill the gaps"

SCALE

Answer Engine Optimization software can help

AEO products are designed to improve a brand's visibility in AI-powered search and discovery engines, including LLMs and AI chatbots.

Profound   SEMRUSH

BRIGHTEDGE   scrunch

Get Cito
earlier AI MONITOR

Otterly.AI   Quattr

conductor   GenRank

Of the **155 products** in this emerging and rapidly growing category, these **9** are ranked on the G2 Grid based on customer reviews *(as of Oct. 30, 2025)*.

How to do it : Content for persona jobs to be done

- **Build out your Agentic personas**
  - One for each profile that is constantly learning
  - Map out jobs to be done
  - Integrate them into your content publishing workflows

- **Be where your buyers live and build what LLMs use**
  - Buy an #AEO platform
  - Understand citation channels that feed LLMs and create content strategy to "fill the gaps"

- **Ensure your content is consistent**
  - Audit all external messaging
  - Update it!

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Example: G2's syndication drives "consensus signal amplification"

G2 reviews are syndicated to the world's largest software marketplaces.

A G2 review, automatically syndicated to **AWS Marketplace**

Fuels Perplexity response for "Best cost effective workforce management systems"

Recommendation #3
Get your PR game on with a comprehensive comms strategy

Why? Media outlets also fuel LLMs

More than **95%** of links cited by AI are non-paid coverage.

Of those, over **27%** of links are journalistic content.

Top Media Outlets Cited

Claude

cnbc.com	hbr.org	goodhousekeeping.com
npr.org	finance.yahoo.com	techradar.com

Gemini

reuters.com	ft.com	axios.com
time.com	investopedia.com	forbes.com

ChatGPT

reuters.com	apnews.com	ft.com
axios.com	time.com	forbes.com

Source: MuckRack's Generative Pulse 2025

How to do it

- Media inclusions

- Op-ed contributions

- Organic social media

Be sure to refine KPIs for an AEO strategy

Brand Mentions/Sentiment

Your product or brand making the shortlist with favorable sentiment

- Mentions on highly cited websites
- Testimonials & reviews
- Consensus across various sources
- User forums & UGC sites

Link Citations

Your links appearing in answers indicating your site as the data source

- Crawler accessibility, LLM.txt, etc.
- Topical coverage breadth
- Specific data aligned to prompts
- Rankings in Google and Bing

Summary

3 things I would do to win the answer in LLMs

1. **Build your brand** where your users live and activate your influencers and customers' voice in communities, peer reviews, and socials

2. **Build a new strategy for content** that is rooted in persona jobs to be done, and use agents to amp up your production

3. **Get your PR game on** to be mentioned in influential publications

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Thank you!
Connect with me on LinkedIn.

Q&A