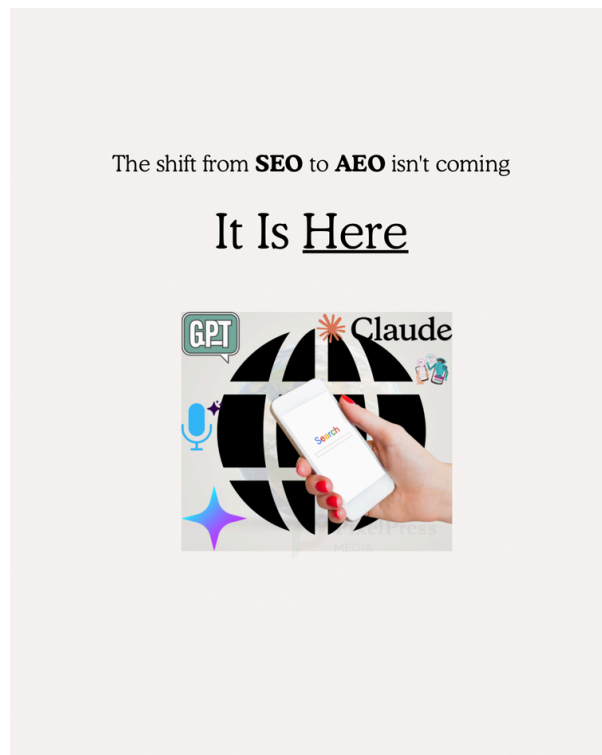


The 2026 AEO Authority Audit: 25 Points to AI Visibility

Internal Resource by PixelPress Media



In 2026, search is no longer a popularity contest, it is a retrieval contest. If AI assistants (Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude) cannot read your authority, you are invisible. Use this checklist to audit your firm's structural integrity.

Phase 1: Structural Integrity (*The Machine Foundation*)

- Organization Schema: JSON-LD code defining your business entity and logo.
- ProfessionalService Schema: Explicitly defining your service area (e.g., London, ON).

- SameAs Attributes: Linking metadata to high-authority profiles (LinkedIn, etc.).
- Sitemap Hierarchy: A clean XML map excluding junk or thin legacy pages.
- Robots.txt Permissions: Explicitly allowing AI agents to crawl high-value data.
- Core Web Vitals: Site speed optimized for instant AI retrieval.
- Canonical Mapping: Ensuring a single source of truth for your content.

Phase 2: Information Density *(The Citation Engine)*

- The Snippet-First Rule: H2/H3 headers followed by direct 1-3 sentence answers.
- Entity-Based Content: Using specific concepts/experts rather than repetitive keywords.
- Bulleted Logic: Complex processes broken into lists for easy LLM parsing.
- Data Freshness: Core strategy content updated within the last 90 days.
- Semantic Linking: Internal links using descriptive, niche-specific anchor text.
- FAQ Schema: Coded Common Questions for instant AI “Zero-Click” answers.
- About Page Depth: Including verified mission data points and founder history.

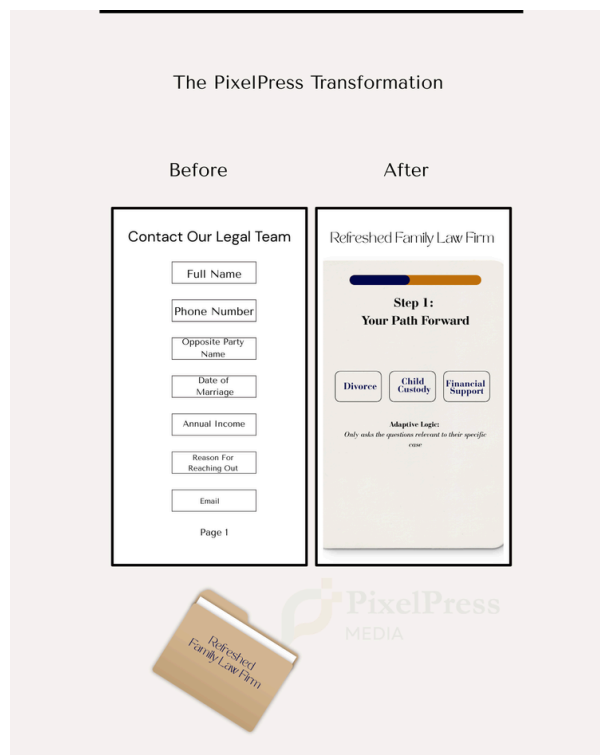
Phase 3: Authority Validation *(The Trust Layer)*

- External Citation Profile: High-authority sites linking to your frameworks.
- Verified Reviews: Google Business Profile reviews feeding into your site’s schema.
- Expert Bylines: Blog posts linked to verified, professional social profiles.
- Case Study Specificity: Project pages featuring raw numbers, dates, and locations.

- Brand Sentiment: Positive brand mentions across third-party industry platforms.
- Peer Recognition: Citations by other industry-adjacent specialists.

Phase 4: The Competitive Edge *(The Definitive Factor)*

- Conversational Mapping: Content matching how users speak to AI assistants.
- Adaptive Content: Summary sections at the top of every long-form page.
- Visual Alt-Text: Describing diagrams/graphics for machine-vision crawlers.
- Local Context: Mentioning specific neighborhood-level business needs.
- Clarity Alignment: A primary CTA integrated into the AI's Answer flow.



The Verdict: *Where Do You Stand?*

- **20-25 Points:** Authority Leader. You are likely being cited by AI today.
- **10-19 Points:** Stagnant Presence. You are visible to humans, but invisible to AI.

- **0-9 Points:** Legacy Risk. Your digital footprint is creating friction for your firm.

Ready to see the map of your own transformation? If your site scored below 20, your infrastructure is leaking leads to AI-ready competitors. Stop fighting for “ten blue links” and start being the definitive answer.

[Book A Clarity Call](#)