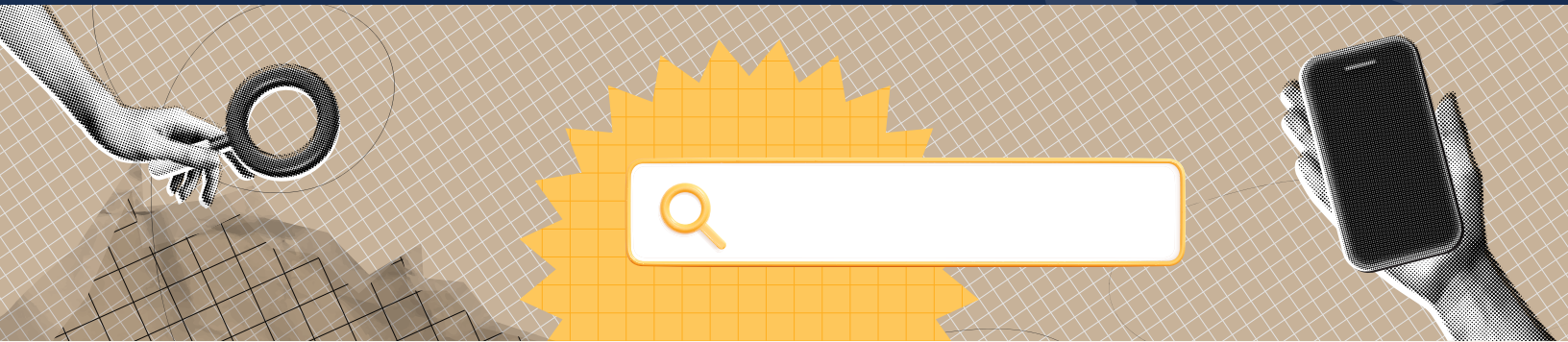


Beyond Search

The New Three-Layer Buyer Journey



The Shift in Buyer Behavior

The buyer journey no longer stops at search. Today it flows through three distinct layers:



The implication: you don't control your narrative anymore unless you show up in all three.

B2B buyers no longer 'search and click.' They search, get answers from AI, and increasingly rely on generative tools to synthesize their decisions. If your firm is not present across all three layers (SEO, AEO, and GEO), you are invisible in parts of the decision journey. If competitors become the cited source in AI outputs, they effectively become the default recommendation. AI will compress vendor consideration sets - if you're not in the model, you're not in the deal.

The Three Layers of Modern Visibility

Each layer serves a specific function in the buyer's journey:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| SEO
(Search Engine Optimization)
Discovery Layer:
Helps buyers find you. | AEO
(Answer Engine Optimization)
Decision Layer:
Answers key questions directly. | GEO
(Generative Engine Optimization)
Authority Layer:
Gets you cited by AI. |

In short: SEO gets you seen. AEO gets you considered. GEO gets you chosen (even when you're not clicked).

If you're ready to build a **coordinated SEO, AEO, and GEO strategy** that **positions your firm as the default recommendation** in all three layers, contact Matt Cummings at matt@jandlcomms.com

The Window Is Closing

Right now, AI models are still training on a broad set of sources. Only firms with citation-ready research and transparent POVs will appear in AI summaries. The window to build GEO content while attention is still fragmented is now.

Your competitors are likely asking themselves the same question: 'Are we showing up everywhere?' Some are already moving. The firms that act now will define the baseline recommendation for years to come.

This requires coordination across three content strategies - each with different formats, audiences, and success metrics. It's a change that most firms need help architecting and executing.

Healthcare Consulting

The Risk

When health system executives search for operational improvement or margin transformation strategies, they're asking AI which consulting firms have proven track records in healthcare. If your firm isn't visible in search results or cited in AI summaries as an authority on healthcare performance improvement, you're invisible in conversations happening in boardrooms right now.

SEO

Search Engine Optimization



Top healthcare consulting firms in the US

Search Results

- Top 10 Healthcare Consulting Firms [Management Consulted]
- Top Healthcare consulting firms in the US [Consulting.us]
- Healthcare consulting – [McKinsey]
- Best Health Care Consulting Firms [Vault]

SEO = Building high intent 'practice area + case type + geography' pages with verifiable case study proof and conversion CTAs

How it Works

- Publish deep pages like 'Telehealth Strategy for US Rural Clinics'.
- Incorporate specific project results and verdicts.
- Use conversion-focused call-to-actions (e.g., 'Request a Firm Resume', 'Request Consultation').

How to Rank Higher

- Focus on long-tail niche practices like 'Healthcare Cybersecurity Compliance'.
- Freshen case studies quarterly.

What to Measure

- Rankings
- Organic Traffic
- Conversions

Types of Pages Needed

- Core Service Pages
- Case Study Pages*

* Case study pages support SEO, AEO, and GEO

AEO

Answer Engine Optimization



What is healthcare consulting?

AI Overview

Healthcare consulting is a specialized field where experts advise hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and health systems to improve operational efficiency, financial performance, and patient care quality.

Consultants analyze data, ensure regulatory compliance, implement technology, and guide strategic changes to help organizations navigate complex industry challenges.

AEO = Building detailed FAQ clusters to proactively address common client healthcare questions and objections

How it Works

- Provide detailed, direct answers to key questions.

Examples

- How to choose the right firm?
- Which company should I work with for 'service x'?

How to Rank Higher

- Answer client objections directly with data and frameworks like 'Choosing a Population Health Firm: A 10-Point Checklist'.

What to Measure

- Featured snippets
- AI overview inclusion
- Zero-click impressions

Types of Pages Needed:

- FAQ Pages
- Objection Hub Pages

GEO

Generative Engine Optimization

ChatGPT 5.4



What type of consulting firm is best for improving hospital margins right now?

Response

Right now, the highest-impact choice is specialized healthcare performance improvement firms (often called "margin transformation" or "operational improvement" consultancies) rather than general strategy firms.

These firms combine clinical, operational, and revenue-cycle expertise and focus on immediate EBITDA lift, not just strategy. They typically target labor productivity, supply chain spend, and revenue cycle leakage, which are the biggest drivers of today's sub-5% hospital margins. Firms like Chartis, BRG, or Forvis Mazars exemplify this model, blending clinicians, operators, and data analysts to implement cost reduction and throughput improvements directly inside hospital operations.

GEO = Becoming the definitive, citable source of proprietary frameworks, healthcare position papers, and proof points for AI reuse and attribution

How it Works

- Publish high-value 'original points-of-view' with deep analysis.
- Embed verifiable data proof points.
- Create detailed, reusable advisory frameworks.

How to Rank Higher

- Create definitive state-of-the-industry reports and methodologies like 'The [Year] U.S. Hospital EHR Interoperability Benchmarking Report'
- Publish authoritative content such as LinkedIn posts, press releases, and trade publication media hits.

What to Measure

- AI outputs
- Branded query lift
- Content reuse signals

Types of Pages Needed

- Research Pages
- POV Pages
- Framework Pages