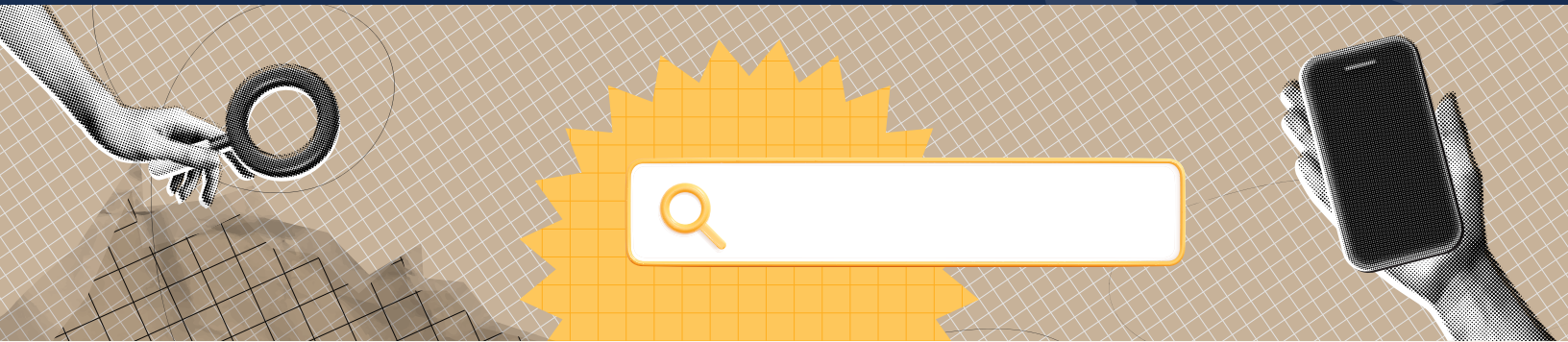


Beyond Search

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.

When in-house counsel or a deal team asks ChatGPT ‘How do law firms differ in handling antitrust cases?’, your firm’s approach needs to be cited. If it isn’t, the firms that appear in the AI response dominate the consideration set, regardless of your actual expertise.

SEO

Search Engine Optimization



Best law firms for private equity deals

Search Results

- *The Best Law Firms for Private Equity Law – Vault*
- *Private Equity: Fund Formation (Chambers)*
- *Private Equity funds (including venture capital) – Legal 500*

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 ‘Intellectual Property for California Startups’.
- Incorporate specific case 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.
- 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 should I look for when hiring a corporate attorney?

AI Overview

When hiring a corporate attorney, prioritize industry-specific expertise, a proven track record in similar transactions (e.g., M&A, financing), and transparent, flexible fee structures. Key traits include proactive communication, business acumen, and availability. Ensure they understand your company’s growth stage and legal risks.

AEO = Building comprehensive FAQ clusters to address common client legal 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.

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



How do law firms differ in handling cartel or antitrust cases?

Response

Law firms differ mainly in approach, resources, and specialization when handling cartel or antitrust cases. Large international firms typically have dedicated antitrust teams with economists, data analysts, and cross-border experience, which is critical for complex, multi-jurisdictional cartel investigations. They often focus on coordinating with regulators like the DOJ or European Commission, managing leniency applications, and handling parallel civil litigation. Smaller or boutique firms, on the other hand, may offer deeper niche expertise, more flexible strategies, and closer client attention, especially in specific industries or in plaintiff-side antitrust litigation.

Another key difference is defense vs. plaintiff orientation. Some firms primarily defend corporations accused of price-fixing or market allocation, emphasizing compliance, internal investigations, and negotiation with regulators. Others specialize in representing plaintiffs, such as businesses or consumers harmed by anticompetitive conduct, focusing on damages recovery and class.

GEO = Becoming the definitive, citable source of proprietary frameworks, legal 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
- 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