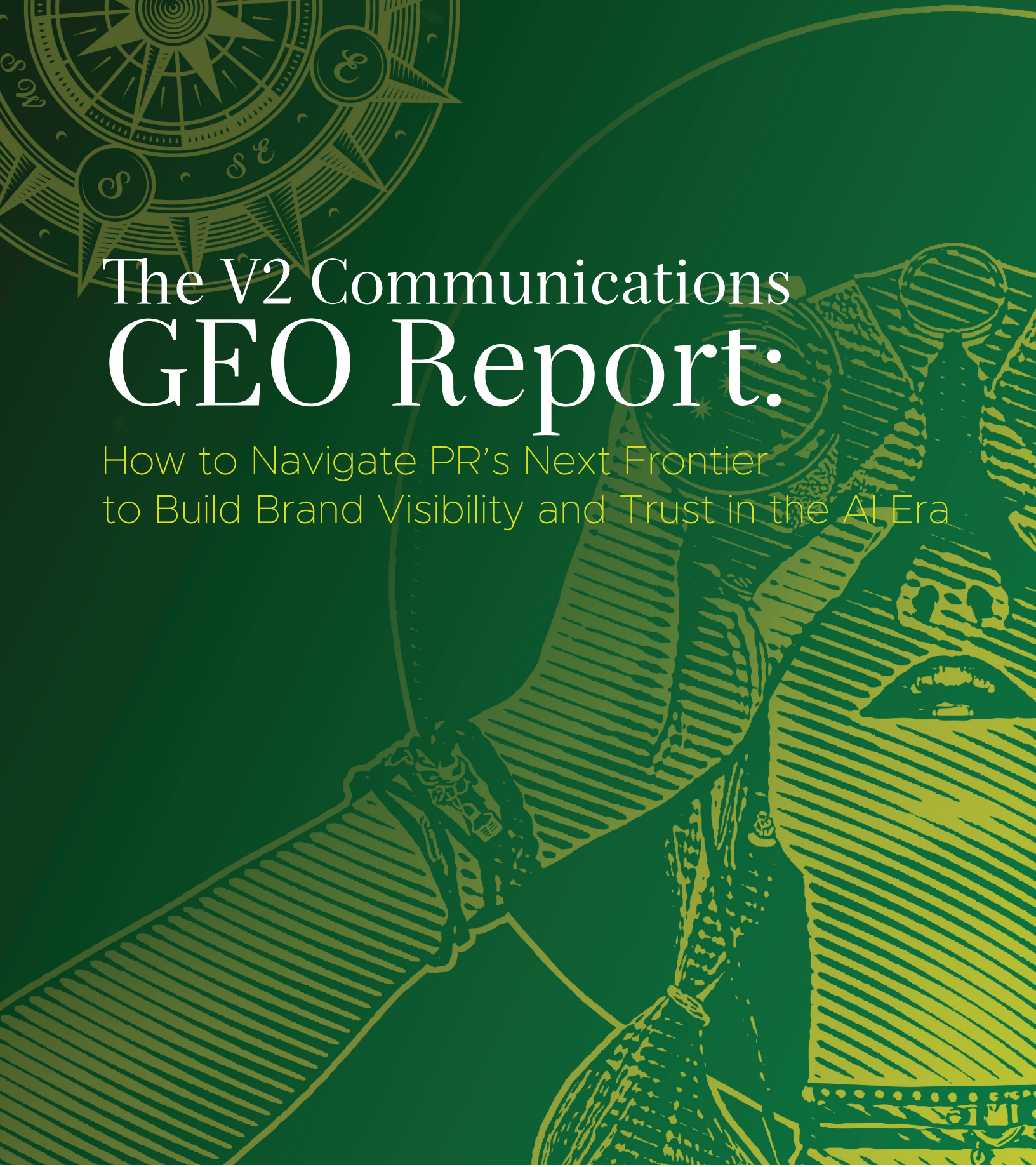




The V2 Communications GEO Report:

How to Navigate PR's Next Frontier
to Build Brand Visibility and Trust in the AI Era



COMMUNICATIONS



INTRODUCTION: PR's Next Frontier

Communications, at its most fundamental level, is all about building and then protecting a brand. It is grounded in getting the right messages in front of the right audiences at the right time—and keeping misperceptions and negativity in check—so audiences know and trust your name.

The PR industry was founded largely on the premise that journalists were critical in helping audiences find, understand and engage with you. For many tech companies, industry analysts helped audiences differentiate and categorize competing options. As the world went digital, SEO became the mechanism that surfaced brands amid a sea of search results. In the early 2010s, SEO budgets surged to meet that need, and PR often went unrecognized for the authority it created.

The AI era flips that script.

Generative engines prioritize news content, authoritative sources and structured releases; all of which are influenced or owned by the communications vertical. [As PRSA argues](#), PR is now poised to be the power player in search, because the generative responses are built from the very assets PR creates.

As this surge in AI adoption grows, communicators must consider how the approach to being discovered, known and trusted by audiences changes when one of those key audiences is AI. Can a brand get its key messages and stories out when AI is also an influencer—or a gatekeeper—in how other audiences come to learn about, understand and engage your brand?

Why Visibility in AI Matters for Brands

80%

Share of people using
zero-click search to conduct
the majority of their queries

(source: [Search Engine Land](#))

2028

when AI-generated results
are projected to overtake
organic search traffic

(source: [SEMrush](#))

2.5b

how many prompts ChatGPT
alone receives every day, from
more than 190M users

(source: [SEMrush](#))



GEO:

The Fundamental Shift and the Communications Opportunity

There is no denying the change afoot for communications leaders: in addition to customers, employees, investors and journalists,

AI is now an audience you must consider, engage and influence.

Generative engines—ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Perplexity—no longer just “rank links.” They read, weigh, synthesize and decide what your stakeholders see as the truth about your company. This shift has sparked a wave of new terminology – Answer Engine Optimization (AEO), Large Language Model Optimization (LLMO), even Artificial Intelligence Optimization (AIO). Each describes some facet of preparing content for machine interpretation. For comms professionals, Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) is the most all-encompassing discipline: ensuring your brand is represented in the answers AI produces.

A critical point is that GEO is not SEO. SEO optimization dictates where your content ranks in search results to drive engagement, while GEO is about being cited in AI-generated responses. Treating AI as an audience, and practicing GEO, is therefore not a side quest for marketing—it’s a core comms discipline that determines how your brand is represented in the new answer layer of the internet.

If you came up in PR believing that credible third-party coverage shapes awareness and trust, the AI era will feel oddly familiar. What's changed? The mechanism. When web citations are enabled, LLMs don't simply tack sources onto what they wrote—they change the answer based on what they cite. In other words, what gets cited gets said. Empirical research backs this up, and does so at scale. In a one-million-link analysis of AI answers across major models conducted by [MuckRack](#),

more than

95%

of links cited by AI were
non-paid media;

nearly nine in ten were
earned sources; and about

27%

were journalistic;

When the prompt implies recency
("what's new," "latest," "recent"),
the share of journalism jumps to

~49%

Authority and freshness matter, too. Outlets such as Reuters, Associated Press and Financial Times are heavily favored as citations, and OpenAI models skew more recent than Anthropic's; over half of journalism cited by OpenAI was published in the past year vs. roughly a third for Anthropic.

However, AI models remain surprisingly gullible. They have no innate ability to judge truth; they repeat and synthesize whatever information they find most accessible, even if incomplete, biased or wrong. A poorly sourced blog post, an outdated company description or a competitor narrative can be woven into an authoritative-sounding answer. The risk is then amplified when in human hands: people tend to place enormous trust in AI outputs, assuming them to be accurate. As [Sam Altman](#) remarked, "People have a very high degree of trust in ChatGPT, which is interesting, because AI hallucinates. It should be the tech that you don't trust that much."

For brands, the risk is clear: if you don't own how AI "knows" you, others—competitors, misinformed sources or bad-faith actors—will, risking an immediate impact on reputation, perception and competitive positioning.

And herein lies the communications opportunity: PR is becoming the power player in search. LLMs elevate *verified*, attributable sources—national, regional and vertical media; Wikipedia and reputable references—precisely the surfaces that communicators can influence.

The upshot for the comms function is that GEO is a strategic priority and the mandate for professionals is urgent: if AI can't see your brand or your story—or sees an outdated or inaccurate version of those things—you effectively don't exist in the answers your stakeholders read. That's not an SEO placement issue to address; it is a brand visibility priority.

Communications-First Framework for GEO

Your remit in GEO is to ensure the material that machines want to cite is available, aligned and easy to verify. Our in-house framework organizes the work into three lenses:

1 Content Readiness

Is your brand's core content structured so AI can easily find and represent it accurately?

Does your brand's messaging remain consistent and factual across every channel, or are there contradictions machines could pick up on?

Have you optimized your brand's content (metadata, schema, structured data) so it's machine-readable and future-proof?

2 Search Visibility and Scope

Does your brand consistently show up in AI-generated answers? Where are competitors taking the spotlight instead?

How does your brand appear in category-level queries that shape perceptions of authority, beyond your own branded searches?

Do you have a process to monitor how AI engines portray your brand, and is that portrayal aligned with the positioning you want in the market?

3 Brand Vulnerability

Which weaknesses in your brand's online presence — outdated content, mixed messaging, weak validation — pose the biggest risk if AI amplifies them?

How prepared is your brand to catch and counter misinformation or negative narratives that could spread faster through AI-driven answers?

Where are the gaps in your brand's proof points or third-party validation that leave space for competitors or critics to define your story instead?

This approach to visibility and reputation management cuts across earned, owned and shared; it rewards consistency of message and it favors sources with clear provenance. Brands that invest now in AI-legible storytelling will gain an early advantage and compound returns over time.

“GEO is not a one-off project; it has to be embedded into the way comms teams operate. At V2, we're helping clients make GEO part of their everyday playbook, so every piece of content, every media hit and every update is structured in a way that AI can recognize, cite and amplify.

— Katelyn Holbrook, Chief Client Officer

Start with an audit: how do the models “know” you?

Before you attempt to influence an answer or ensure your brand is prevalent in your audience’s searches, you first must know how your brand is showing up.

Foundational to any GEO strategy is a baseline audit to understand how myriad AI models represent you today. Run structured queries across ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot and Perplexity that include:

- branded prompts (company, products, executives);
- category and problem-space prompts; competitor comparisons; and
- “what’s new” or “who’s best” style prompts

Document whether your brand appears, how it’s described and which sources are cited. Most teams discover stale messaging, unexpected competitive frames and surprising blind spots where they should appear but don’t.

The audit also becomes your source map. It will show which domains the models rely on for your topics—wire services, national press, vertical titles, Wikipedia and owned pages. That insight helps you prioritize where to shore up coverage and where to harden your owned canon.

Treat this as a comms exercise with data, not a technical fishing expedition. You’re interrogating what the world has said about you (and what you’ve said about yourself), then closing gaps with verifiable narratives.

V2’s AI Share of Voice Audit is designed to map how, where and how often your brand appears across generative AI platforms, benchmarking you against competitors and surfacing both risks and opportunities to strengthen your presence in the answer layer.

What’s in a Source? Takeaways from Initial Audits

In the audits V2 has performed for clients, a few patterns have emerged that other brands can learn from:

1) High-authority outlets are gravitational centers.

LLMs frequently cite widely trusted publishers; across models, the likes of Reuters, AP and FT recur. That does not mean vertical and regional press are optional—far from it. Local and trade coverage often counts as much as a marquee placement when the site has a high domain authority and the text is relevant and well-structured.

2) Recency is emphatically a ranking factor in AI answers.

Among cited journalism, the bias toward stories from the last year is strong; OpenAI exhibits the sharpest recency preference. If your brand’s last meaningful mention is old, your risk of omission rises.

3) Relevance trumps “tiering.” When questions become specific, AI systems often select niche-appropriate outlets. In technology topics, encyclopedic and academic sources fall toward zero while journalism and owned media rise; in healthcare, government and NGO, sources are unusually prominent. That’s a call to be present wherever your topic is truly covered—vertical trades, local newsrooms, credible community forums—not only the usual big names.

Shaping your Brand's AI Reputation

You already own the right levers—earned storytelling, crisp owned facts, a disciplined press office. What's different now is the intentionality: GEO requires communicators to think not just about brand visibility, but also about citability. The goal is to reduce ambiguity so machines can confidently repeat your story accurately and often.

What follows is a glimpse into the best practices that will help reach that goal.

Earned media: Center of Gravity

Journalism is the single biggest category of citations in AI answers—and it surges for recency-oriented prompts. That gives classic PR muscles new urgency. Prioritize reported stories that embed facts, comparisons and attributable quotes, design data journalism or executive commentary that others will excerpt, and develop pipelines for rapid, on-the-record reactions when your market moves.

Equally important is the structure of earned coverage. Articles with clear entity references, such as company names, product names or executive titles, coupled with straightforward descriptions, are far more likely to be cited.

An emerging motion is syndicated earned reach: producing editorial-quality content that runs widely across reputable local and vertical outlets—the very surfaces LLMs read—explicitly to be referenced in AI search. The goal isn't just to “rank,” it's to be referenced in AI answers. This is where partnerships with syndication networks, wire services and even regional press matter more than ever.

“As generative engines reshape how people discover information, authority is increasingly built through the company you keep – the credible publishers and journalists who carry your story forward. Earned media isn't just brand awareness anymore; it's how your perspective becomes part of the public record that AI learns from.”

– Noah Greenberg,
Chief Executive Officer, Stacker

Owned content: Write Your Canon for Humans and Machines

Your website is an anchor that the models consult for stable facts. Tighten your About, product pages, executive bios, investor facts and FAQs for clarity, structure and consistency. Use descriptive headings, lists and tables where natural. Consolidate canonical statements (pricing, availability, product names) and cross-reference to third-party validation where available. Above all, keep the machine-readable canon synchronized with what you pitch externally. While GEO isn't purely technical, content that is semantically clear and machine-readable increases the chance of accurate citation.

Press Releases: The Comeback Kid

Releases do double duty now: they reach journalists and feed structured, attributable information directly into AI's retrieval layer.

The format—headline, subhead, dateline, quotes, boilerplate, timestamp—maps cleanly to how AI systems evaluate source trust. Notified, the owner of GlobeNewswire, distills the guidance here down to the “why” and the “how”: design releases for AI search with clear facts, logical structure and distribution through verified networks.

In practice, draft releases in answer format—write the first three paragraphs so a model can lift what happened, why it matters and what's next—then include specific entities (product names, partners, SKUs) and links to canonical pages. While this format may be uncomfortable for those who grew up in communications writing in formal styles designed for journalists, having “answer-format” discipline is key to increasing extractability.

“Press releases have always shaped perception, but in the age of AI they also shape discovery. A well-structured, clearly written release isn't just for journalists anymore; it's also for the algorithms powering how people get information in the new Answer Economy. When your news is published through a trusted platform like GlobeNewswire, you're not just telling your story, you're teaching AI to tell it, too.”

– Erik Carlson,
Chief Executive Officer, Notified

Community Matters: Wikipedia and Reference Surfaces

LLMs routinely cross-check against Wikipedia as a neutral fact anchor. You shouldn't edit your own page, but you can create the conditions for accurate updates by publishing well-sourced owned facts and earning coverage that volunteers can cite.

Beyond Wikipedia, community-driven surfaces such as Reddit, Quora and review sites often appear in AI answers because they signal relevance and authenticity. Monitoring these channels and ensuring accurate, well-sourced information circulates is an underappreciated aspect of GEO.

Paid Media: Shift to Amplification and Adjacency

Paid media has always played a role in shaping awareness, but its relationship to generative AI machines is different from that with traditional search. LLMs favor verifiable, third-party sources and often deprioritize (or exclude overtly) paid placements. This does not mean paid is now irrelevant, it just requires a shift in strategy:

1. Amplify what is earned and owned via native advertising and syndication networks:

paid distribution can extend the reach of platinum press coverage, research reports or any owned content by seeding it across other ecosystems crawled by AI. This can also be a method to refresh and redistribute any credible content that is at risk of being outdated

2. Think adjacency, not substitution:

paid placements alone won't get your story into the answer layer, but they can reinforce the earned and owned signals that do

Ecosystem Considerations: Align Channels to Models' Content Graphs

The large assistants are not pulling from a single, universal set of data – they are fed by different content graphs shaped by the platforms behind them. Understanding these ecosystems is key to prioritizing where you seed credible, attributable content.

- **LinkedIn + Microsoft Copilot:** Microsoft's Copilot is deeply informed by LinkedIn's professional network. Authority here comes from consistent thought leadership posts, executive commentary, company updates and participation in topical conversations. For B2B brands, this makes LinkedIn not just a social channel, but a primary training surface.

- **YouTube + Google Gemini:** Google heavily relies on YouTube's video library and metadata. Clear video titles, structured descriptions, transcripts and keyword-rich captions all increase the odds that your content informs Gemini's answers. This is an opportunity to leverage owned video content as an influence lever for AI visibility.

- **Meta + Llama Models:** Meta's family of apps (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp) feed into Llama's training data. Engagement signals from credible accounts, verified pages and community interaction can help reinforce your brand's presence in these models. For consumer-facing brands, this ecosystem shapes how Llama answers reflect reputation and trust.

Embedding AI-Aware Practices into Your Press Office

The most successful teams don't spin up ad-hoc fixes, they institutionalize GEO behaviors across people, processes and platforms.

■ Govern the message

Maintain a single, living repository of canonical statements—your “machine-readable canon.” If a product claim leaves your mouth in a pitch, it must live, verbatim, on an owned page that's easy to crawl and cite. When the model gets a detail wrong, fix the upstream signal (press release + owned page + third-party reference + Wikipedia) rather than arguing with the assistant.

■ Optimize all content for AI discoverability

Large language models don't just scan headlines and keywords—they parse full context, structure, and credibility signals. Use clear, consistent phrasing for product and company descriptors, anticipate the kinds of natural-language questions assistants may receive, and mirror that language in your owned content. Structure pages with concise summaries, FAQs, and schema markup so models can more easily ingest and cite your information. Link out to reputable third-party sources and cross-reference your own assets to reinforce authority.

■ Make model-aware distribution a habit

Design campaigns with a matrix that maps priority topics × model families × query types (fact lookups, current updates, advice, comparisons). That matrix becomes the backbone of pitching, releases, and content refreshes—and it's how you avoid over-investing in surfaces your buyers' assistants barely consult.

■ Upgrade measurement to reflect the reality of AI answers

Traditional referral metrics will miss the impact of being cited in an answer. Add a new layer of visibility tracking: presence in the answer layer, types of queries you appear in and the mix of sources LLMs cite for your category.

■ Practice refresh cycles

Because recency is a ranking factor, prioritize updating owned content, executive bios and product descriptions. What hasn't been refreshed in some time is at risk of disappearing from AI answers.

CONCLUSION: Own Your Story in the Answer Layer

The rise of generative AI has created a new reality for communicators: your brand is no longer only discovered through headlines, search results or analyst reports, but increasingly defined in the answers LLMs deliver. In this environment, investing in GEO is not optional.

But, communicators remain in power, already holding the levers that matter – earned storytelling, credible third-party validation, owned channels and targeted distribution. What's different now is the requirement to ensure those assets are structured, consistent and easy for AI to cite. Brands that embrace GEO early will shape how they are known, trusted and compared for years to come. Those that don't risk invisibility or misrepresentation in the new medium where more and more audiences are looking for truth.

This is the new battleground for brand visibility. The organizations that succeed will be those that treat AI as another audience, GEO as a discipline and the answer layer as the front line of brand reputation.





Navigate PR's Next Frontier with V2 Communications' GEO Services

With V2's AI-first communications framework

- **You own the answers that matter**
- **You drive influence before your competitors**
- **You seize leadership**

V2 Communications guides B2B, climate and healthcare tech brands through the GEO process, from defining the strategy and connecting siloed teams, to executing programs that will drive positive change to AI results, through to monitoring and optimizing performance as both models change and brand, competitive and market dynamics evolve. Services include:

- **AI Share of Voice Audit** - Map how, where, and how often your brand appears across generative AI platforms. Benchmark against competitors to uncover gaps and opportunities.
- **Content Alignment** - Update existing or craft new AI-ready content—Q&A copy, entity-rich language, and semantically structured answers—so your brand information is accurately indexed and consistently surfaced.
 - Owned content | Press releases
Bylined articles
- **AI Monitoring** - Continuously track brand presence across AI engines to detect shifts, competitor moves, and new opportunities.
 - Presence tracking | Citation and source identification | Insight reporting
- **Authority-Building Media Strategy** - Secure high-authority coverage that feeds the AI ecosystem and boosts your likelihood of being cited. Earned media builds trust with AI.
 - Platinum publication coverage | Scaled thought leadership via Stacker | Listicle & roundup campaigns
- **Influencer & Community Management** - Engage trusted voices and communities to amplify brand relevance and authority signals AI engines use to generate answers.
 - Influencer partnerships | Industry forums & groups | Wikipedia | Reddit | Review Sites

Reach out to info@v2comms.com to learn more and chat with a V2 expert.

Additional Reading and Resources from V2 Comms & Our Partners

- [Brand Discoverability in the Age of AI: How Comms Pros Must Evolve](#)
- [The Earned Media Renaissance & Its Role in the Integrated Approach](#)
- [What Executives Need to Know about Generative Engine Optimization](#) MuckRack whitepaper
- [5 Truths about Earned Media's Role in AI Search Marketing](#) Stacker blog
- [Why Sponsored Content Isn't Enough: The Case for Earned Reach](#) Stacker blog
- [The Modern Guide to Press Release Formatting](#) Notified eBook

V2 Communications is an integrated communications firm that works with B2B, climate and healthcare technology companies, from startups to publicly traded companies. V2's clients strive to be iconic technology brands that have an outsized impact on business, the planet, or humanity through their innovations, and V2 designs and executes integrated communications strategies across earned, owned and paid channels that shape their markets and make them market leaders. V2's proven process ensures clients benefit from thorough program planning, increased speed, flexibility, and efficiency of program execution, and ongoing strategic counsel to maximize market shifts and refine programs to deliver consistent high levels of business success.

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