

When AI answers questions about your company

What the changing way people research companies means for leadership and communications in the real estate industry.

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Executive Summary

01 The first impression may come from an AI answer.

Clients and business partners can compare companies without visiting their websites. Management decides what should be clear before direct contact.

02 Not every search starts with a name.

People looking for suitable providers may not yet know their names. Services, experience and areas of expertise should therefore be clear from publicly available information.

03 Plan expert content, PR and SEO together.

Substantive original content, professional media relations and an accessible website provide a basis for AI-assisted research. A mention cannot be guaranteed.

04 Do not leave AI errors to the technical team alone.

Communications leaders and subject-matter experts work together to resolve incorrect information about responsibilities or services. Legitimate criticism is not an error.

05 Do not measure communications by clicks alone.

Information that remains useful over time also needs resources. What matters is how AI answers describe the company and what the audience takes away.

What others learn before meeting you at EXPO REAL

EXPO REAL takes place in Munich from 5 to 7 October 2026. Preparations for face-to-face meetings begin earlier: participants can use the official network to research other companies and people and arrange meetings weeks before the event. This raises an additional question for management and communications: what do prospective contacts learn about the company when they use AI to prepare? [\[1\]](#)

These capabilities are now built directly into Google Search. The rollout of AI Mode in Germany began on 8 October 2025. In May 2026, Google also announced the ability to move directly from an AI Overview to follow-up questions in AI Mode. Users can summarise information, compare companies and ask follow-up questions within the same research session. The system can combine multiple searches and sources to do this. [\[2\]](#)

Third-party assessments of companies existed long before AI. What is new is an answer compiled for a specific question that allows immediate follow-up questions. A prospective contact can use it to learn about the company without first reading its website. **Management and communications therefore need to decide what people should understand about the company before any direct contact, and what expertise to make publicly available for that purpose.** [\[2\]](#)

With an AI summary present, users clicked on a traditional Google search result in only **8%** of cases. Without an AI summary, the figure was **15%**. Pew Research Center observed this among 900 adults in the US. A Google search therefore does not automatically lead to a visit to the linked websites. [\[3\]](#)

42
per cent

Professionals also use AI. In Brunswick's investor survey for 2026, 42 per cent of the 100 institutional US equity investors surveyed said they used AI for in-depth research into new investments. Personal contact with company management remained particularly important. This raises a question for real estate companies: what do prospective contacts learn about them through this additional source of information? [\[4\]](#)

Not every search begins with a company name

The question **“What does this company do?”** calls for different information from **“Who can help us with this task?”** The first concerns a company the person already knows. In the second, they are still looking for suitable providers.

Checking only whether AI describes your own company accurately overlooks this second route.

Suppose a property owner is looking for advice on converting vacant office space and asks for a comparison of providers. One consultancy has the relevant experience but explains it only in face-to-face presentations. Those explanations are not available to someone researching public sources. A general description of its services may leave unclear which tasks the firm actually undertakes. Subsequent checks establish whether a provider that has been named is right for the specific assignment.

Management therefore needs to determine which information should be public and which belongs in direct discussions. The company's activities, areas of expertise and scope of services must be clear enough for prospective clients to prepare meaningfully for a conversation. Confidential project data, client-specific terms and detailed assessments remain reserved for the appropriate discussions.

Together with communications, management determines which commercially important questions the company will address by publishing its own insights. This makes information about its expertise available for searches that initially concern a task rather than a particular company. It creates a basis for being recognised as a knowledgeable provider.

Before a provider or an investment is assessed, corporate communications thus explains what the company does and which questions its specialists are equipped to address. It complements sales, investor relations and personal relationships. This also matters for established firms whose business or brand has not changed.

Plan expert content, media relations and discoverability together

Original research, demonstrable experience and expert assessments matter here. For its generative search features, Google expressly recommends original content based on experience that goes beyond generally available statements. [\[5\]](#)

Subject-matter experts need time to contribute publicly; editors need to be able to draw out their insights and keep them up to date. Where budgets are limited, a few substantive pieces on important questions take priority over a constant stream of general market commentary. The deciding factor is what clients, business partners or job applicants should understand about the company's actual work.

27

per cent

Professional media relations adds to the information available publicly. A researched article or interview first reaches the publication's readers and may later serve as a source for an AI answer. In a study published in May 2026, PR software provider Muck Rack analysed web-enabled AI answers to constructed, consumer-oriented questions. Around 27 per cent of the source links analysed pointed to journalistic content. [\[6\]](#)

What matters is the information a mention conveys. Developing topics and speaking with journalists must make verifiable information and independent assessments possible. A company's own publications explain its perspective; journalistic articles can examine, add to or challenge it. Contributed articles remain the views of their authors; republished press releases convey the company's position. Media relations must therefore also allow for critical scrutiny.

Search engine optimisation, or SEO, is part of this too. Google bases its AI search on established search and quality systems. Content must be accessible and discoverable through that search. [\[5\]](#) **The leadership task is to set priorities for expert content, media relations and the website together.** Expert content must be convincing and technically accessible.

Web search and model training need to be treated separately. OpenAI distinguishes access for search from possible use for model training. Whether a new publication informs an answer also depends on whether the system uses a current web search for it. [\[7\]](#)

Even accurate sources can produce an incorrect answer

AI systems can assemble incorrect answers even from accurate sources. The international BBC/EBU study published in 2025 documented outdated information, missing context and claims not supported by the cited sources in answers to news questions. It examined the consumer versions of ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini and Perplexity available at the time. [\[8\]](#)

Suppose a journalist is researching a property developer. The AI combines an earlier project announcement with current company information but overlooks a sale that has taken place in the meantime. The journalist could then ask about decisions for which a different owner is now responsible. The original publication may be factually correct. **The error lies in using it as an account of who is responsible today.**

The head of communications determines which third-party descriptions deserve attention. The focus is on errors that change an important assessment of the company, such as incorrect statements about responsibilities, an inaccurate description of the scope of services or confusion between legal entities. Errors that could have significant consequences for the audience concerned are addressed first, regardless of whether the company likes the answer. Legitimate criticism remains part of public debate.

If the underlying information is wrong, the company corrects its own statements or asks the publisher to make a correction. A factually accurate historical publication is preserved. If AI uses it incorrectly, the company documents the current position more clearly and reports the error to the provider.

The head of communications resolves these cases with the relevant experts rather than leaving them to the technical team alone.

Do not allocate resources based on reach alone

For management, this is about allocating existing resources. It needs to examine whether budgets and subject-matter experts' time go mainly towards short-term communications activity or also towards information and original insights that remain useful. This work needs a remit that extends beyond the publication date. Its value lies in enabling well-founded research about the company.

Someone who reads only an AI answer does not appear in website visit figures. Communications evaluation therefore needs to distinguish more precisely: **a source citation, a company mention and a positive assessment are different outcomes.** Microsoft's analysis of AI citations measures how frequently sources are linked. The prominence of a mention within an answer needs to be assessed separately. [\[9\]](#)

The head of communications needs to consider separately whether essential information is available, how it is used in the answers reviewed, and what actual audiences report back. Individual tests provide specific findings: which facts are reproduced correctly, where important context is missing and where errors arise. Conclusions about overall impact need a broader basis than individual tests. **What matters is how an answer describes the company and what the audience takes away, not simply the number of mentions.**

Where information, expert contributions and responsibilities are already adequate, the existing approach can continue. Where they are lacking, management needs to set priorities and assign responsibility: what should be apparent before direct contact, which expertise deserves public attention, and who addresses significant misrepresentations? This applies to investment and asset managers as well as property owners, developers, advisers and service providers, even though their answers will differ.

EXPO REAL provides a concrete reason to address these questions. The decision extends beyond the days of the fair:

What should people be able to find out about the company before making direct contact?

A strong presence in Munich remains important. Preparing for it also means examining what knowledge the company shares publicly and how it deals with the answers others build from it.

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