



AI & SEARCH

GEO is the biggest opportunity for SMEs since Google

Written by **Stuart Alldis**, Managing Director of CDA

Marketing has changed more in the last few years than it did in the entire last decade.

AI is everywhere, new tools appear every week, and as a business owner it can feel like you're constantly playing catch up. But every now and then something comes along that isn't just another trend, but something to pay attention to. GEO is one of those things.

GEO — Generative Engine Optimisation is the term for getting your business recommended and your content cited by AI search tools like ChatGPT and Google AI. It's the evolution of SEO (Search Engine Optimisation, or as we used to call it, "making Google happy").

For years we've all been focused on SEO. The aim was simple: get your website to the top of Google so potential customers could find you. But we can no longer just make Google happy. AI has caused the biggest shake up to search since Google launched almost 30 years ago, and now there are multiple channels that people use to search for products and services.

Think about how you've searched for something recently. Have you asked ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini (or even TikTok) a question instead of opening Google? You're not alone; most people have, and they do it by default now.

THEY USED TO SEARCH

"accountant Hitchin"

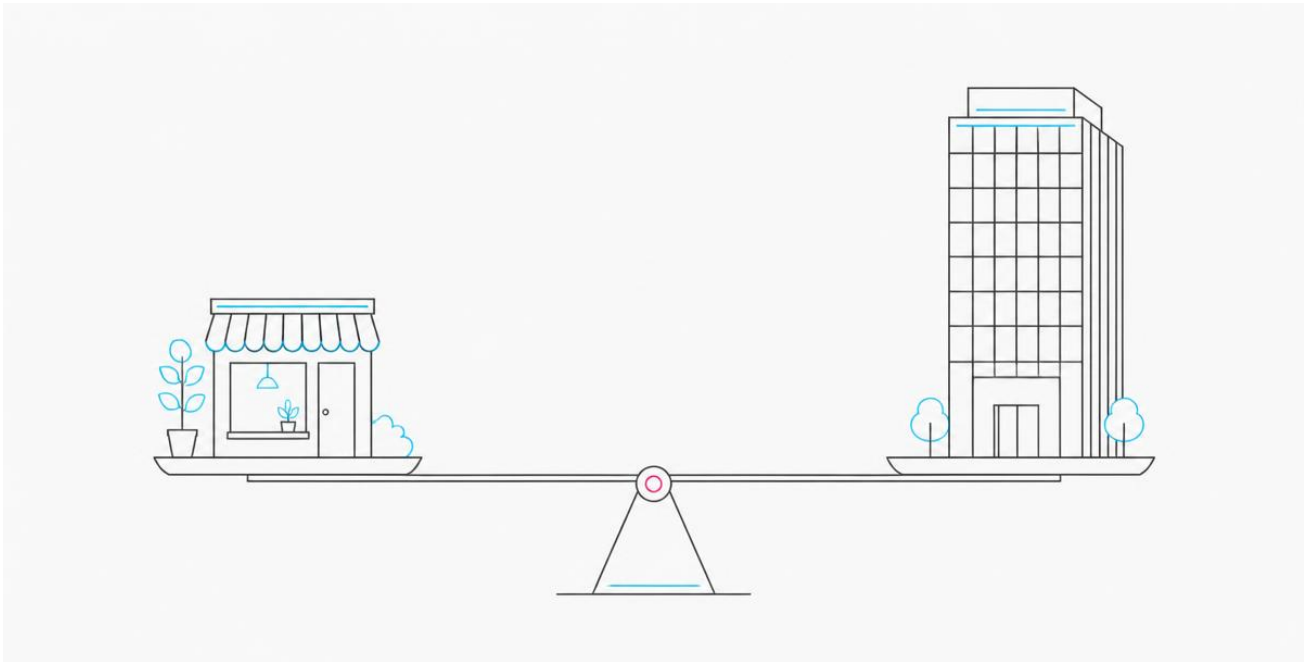
NOW THEY ASK

"Can you recommend an accountant who specialises in small businesses?"

Instead of searching for "marketing agency", they're asking, "How can I generate new leads for my B2B business?", and then having a conversation with the AI agent to do their research before eventually reaching out to a recommended agency. This is called natural language processing; it's a completely different way of searching.

What's really key is that AI isn't just looking for the biggest company or the one that's spent the most on advertising. It's looking for the business that **appears to know its stuff**.

A level playing field for smaller businesses



GEO rewards demonstrated expertise, not the biggest advertising budget.

This is a huge opportunity for SMEs. For years, smaller businesses have often been competing against companies with huge marketing budgets, but GEO levels the playing field.

What the AI search does when it answers those questions is scour the web for the most relevant content that will provide the most helpful information and answers. You can be the best of the best, the expert in your field, but if your website doesn't demonstrate this by providing helpful content for ChatGPT to give its users, then you won't get found beyond 2026.

Google's search market share has dropped to its lowest since the early 2000s, signalling a big shift in how people will search going forward. Google itself has made AI Mode the default search engine in the US, with plans to do the same in the UK, likely next year, meaning your website needs to start answering the questions that your potential customers are asking AI (this is what the 'industry' calls a GEO Strategy).

So how can SMEs take advantage of the GEO opportunity?

The reality is most businesses haven't even heard of GEO yet, so the businesses that start now will have a head start. And AI doesn't simply reward the biggest business who shout the loudest. It rewards businesses that clearly demonstrate expertise, answer questions well and have built trust online, meaning you don't need to reinvent your business, you just need to start sharing what you already know on as many platforms as possible.

For those interested in the science, AI search engines are trained using what's called 'Large Language Models' (LLMs) which scan huge amounts of data sources to learn context and provide

natural, helpful responses to search queries. These channels include your website, your blog and your social media channels, which is why all these digital channels need to be constantly providing helpful AI search-ready content.

If you regularly answer customers' questions, if your website is actually helpful and if you're building trust through helpful social media content, AI is far more likely to recommend you than many people realise. If you're not sure how to do this, think about:

- What questions do my prospects and customers regularly ask?
- What problems do I solve?
- What projects have I successfully delivered?
- What insights and advice can I share?

Remember, sharing tips and guidance doesn't mean the person searching will actually do it themselves, but it will make it easier for both prospects and AI to recognise that you're good at what you do and are a reliable source / supplier.

AI has already changed search and it's not going anywhere. What the successful SMEs of tomorrow understand is that it means prospects will spend more time in ChatGPT / Claude / Gemini etc. while they do their research, but by the time they get to your website they'll be clued up and confident that you're the business they want to reach out to.

As an SME owner, don't see AI as something to worry about, see it as an opportunity. Having a GEO strategy is about building brand awareness and trust without having to fork out big budgets for Google Ads.

“For the first time in decades, being knowledgeable and genuinely helpful can become your biggest competitive advantage.”



THE CDA PODCAST

Hear the full conversation on GEO

Stuart talks through what GEO means in practice and how smaller businesses can get started today.

[▶ Watch on YouTube](#)

[▶ Listen on Spotify](#)

youtube.com/watch?v=1NkOVEwKsQI · open.spotify.com/episode/6lhCLDn7xKNUpGlszIK6gC

ABOUT CDA

CDA: making digital feel human

CDA is a Hertfordshire based digital agency helping businesses use websites, eCommerce, digital marketing, software and AI to achieve real commercial results. Founded in 2014, CDA combines agency creativity and technical expertise with senior level commercial experience.

Our approach is not simply about building websites or running marketing campaigns. We look at the complete customer journey and ask a much more important question: *how can digital make it easier for somebody to find your business, understand you, trust you and ultimately become a customer?*

OUR WORK COVERS

- B2B websites and lead generation
- eCommerce including Shopify, WooCommerce and Magento
- Digital marketing including SEO, GEO, paid advertising, social media and content
- User experience and conversion optimisation
- Bespoke software, portals and booking systems
- AI consultancy, automation and business efficiency
- Website support and ongoing digital improvement

CDA works with businesses ranging from smaller SMEs through to established organisations with complex digital requirements.

Technology should solve business problems, not create more of them.



NEXT STEP

Talk to CDA about your GEO strategy

If you would like to understand where your business currently stands with AI search, and what a practical GEO strategy would look like for you, get in touch for a straightforward conversation.

Stuart Alldis · Managing Director, CDA

stuart@cda.group

0203 780 0808

cda.group

CDA GROUP · MAKING DIGITAL FEEL HUMAN