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5 Steps to Increase Your Brand's AI Visibility

How wine, spirits, food and hospitality brands can shape what LLMs tell their customers

01	02	03	04	05
ASK	AUDIT	PLAN	ACTIVATE	EVOLVE

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Cultivate Your Message

INTRODUCTION

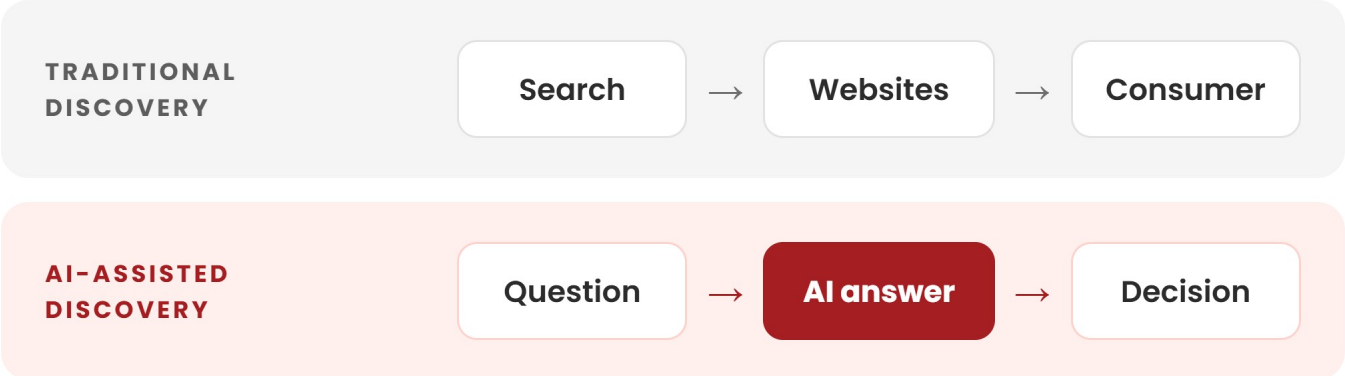
The question has moved. Has your brand?

Your next customer may never see your website. They will ask an AI assistant where to book dinner, which hotel to stay at, which wineries to visit in your region, which bottle to bring to a dinner party, or how your brand compares with the one beside it on the shelf. Then they will act on the answer.

For years, discovery ran through search: a query, a list of websites, a click. Today it increasingly runs through a single AI-generated answer that names a shortlist and explains why. **If your brand is not in that answer, you are not in the consideration set.**

The good news: AI answers are not random, and they cannot be bought. They are built from the information that already exists about you across the press, your own websites, retailers, trade sources and social channels. That means they can be shaped, deliberately and credibly. This paper sets out five steps to do it.

HOW DISCOVERY HAS CHANGED



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HOW IT WORKS

How AI decides what to recommend

Take a typical question: *"What are the best luxury wineries to visit in [region]?"* Behind the answer sit five stages.

01
The question
A moment, a need or an occasion, often with no brand named

02
What it already knows
Everything the model absorbed during training

03
What it retrieves
Websites, articles and listings it finds when it searches

04
How it composes
It reads the question and the information, then selects and describes

05
The recommen-dation
A shortlist, the reasons behind it and sometimes its sources

Stages 2 and 3 are where brands win or lose.

Press coverage, your own web content and your listings shape both what the model already knows and what it finds when it looks.

Illustrative process. Not every AI answer uses live search, and each platform ranks and selects sources in its own way.

The answer draws on your whole ecosystem

Earned media
Journalism, critics, reviews

Owned media
Brand sites, menus, guides, FAQs

Third-party authority
Trade, retailers, review and reservation platforms

Social & community
Creators, forums, social

WHAT AI READS

AI visibility is earned, not bought

A May 2026 Muck Rack study of more than 25 million links cited by ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini shows where AI answers come from.

84%

Earned media

Journalism, academic, government and reference sources

27%

Journalism

News and editorial sources, a subset of earned media

0.3%

Paid & advertorial

Visibility in AI answers has to be earned. It can't be bought.

Recency matters too.

Over half of the journalism AI cites was published in the past year. A placement now does two jobs: it reaches readers, and it shapes the answers your customers receive long after the issue has closed.

Source: Muck Rack, *What Is AI Reading?* (May 2026), 25M+ cited links across ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini.

YOUR ECOSYSTEM

One brand story, told everywhere

AI does not read your brand in one place. It blends every touchpoint into a single answer, so every touchpoint now speaks to the others.

Critics & press
Scores, reviews and features: the proof

Your websites
One story, every product, every detail

Retail, trade & partners
The same facts on every listing, importer and distributor

The founder's or chef's voice
Interviews and talks: the maker's story

ONE BRAND STORY
AI blends every touchpoint into one answer

Regional & travel
Tourism boards and itinerary guides

The visit
Tastings, tours, dinners and stays: the moment

Social & sommeliers
Creators and the people who pour, cook and host

Review & booking platforms
Where guests compare, decide and reserve

WHEN THEY DISAGREE

AI fills the gaps itself: an outdated bio, one score instead of the full record, a tasting room it thinks is closed.

WHEN THEY ALIGN

AI repeats your story with confidence, in your words, across platforms.

WHAT EVERY TOUCHPOINT MUST DELIVER

The six things AI needs from your information

1 · CLARITY

Say exactly what you mean

What the brand is, where it is, what it offers and why it matters.

2 · STRUCTURE

Organize it logically

"Private Wine Tastings in [Region]" says more than "Experiences."

3 · CREDIBILITY

Show who else confirms it

Critics, travel writers and tourism bodies corroborate your claims. This is where earned media matters most.

4 · CONSISTENCY

Make the facts agree

Location, offer, hours, booking and story match across site, listings and coverage.

5 · RELEVANCE

Answer the real question

"Where can I book an exclusive tasting in [region]?"

6 · ACCESSIBILITY

Make it retrievable

Key details in readable page text, not images, PDFs, scripts or blocked pages.

The difference shows up in a single sentence

INSTEAD OF

"Discover an unforgettable journey through exceptional wines."

Gives AI nothing to work with.

WRITE

"[Winery] offers private wine tastings, vineyard tours and food pairings in [region]."

Answers a question someone is actually asking.

THE FIVE STEPS

From intelligence to influence

01	02	03	04	05
ASK	**AUDIT**	**PLAN**	**ACTIVATE**	**EVOLVE**
Question list	Baseline	Action plan	Pitch calendar	Monthly report

STEP 01 · ASK

Start with your objectives, not your content

Don't begin with "What content should we create?" Begin with "What does our audience need to know?"

BUILD YOUR LIST

1. Agree two or three business objectives: more reservations or cellar door visits, stronger retail and on-premise placement, a launch that lands.
2. For each, write the questions a real consumer, traveler or trade buyer would type into an AI assistant.
3. Name your key competitors so you can compare.
4. Add timely questions around a launch, an anniversary or a new menu.
5. Aim for about 20 questions, then lock the list so you can track it over time.

MIX THE QUESTION TYPES

Category
"What are the best Super Tuscan wines?"

Occasion
"Where should I go for an anniversary dinner in [city]?"

Comparison
"How does [brand] compare with [competitor]?"

Place & timely
"Which boutique hotels in [region] have the best food?"

YOU'LL HAVE A question list tied to your business goals.

STEP 02 · AUDIT

Find out what AI says about you today

Before changing anything, establish a baseline.

Three platforms

ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini each draw on different sources.

Every question, every day

Answers vary day to day, so one check is never enough.

About a week to start

Enough answers for a directional baseline; then keep it running.

WHAT TO MEASURE

Mention rate · the share of answers that name your brand

Named first · how often you lead the list

By platform and question type · where you appear and where you vanish

Company and description · who appears alongside you, and how AI describes you

Sources cited · which outlets and sites AI links to

READ YOUR SITES THE WAY AI DOES

AI reads plain page text. Anything locked in images, PDFs or scripts may as well not exist.

AI access · are AI crawlers allowed to read your site?

Product & experience pages · one readable page each, with tasting notes, menus, pairings and prices

Acclaim · scores, reviews and awards in text, in one place

Visit details · hours, pricing, reservations and directions

One story · the same bio and facts on every site you own

YOU'LL HAVE A baseline, and a short ranked list of what's working and what to fix.

STEP 02 · READING THE RESULTS

Five patterns to look for

- You're on the list, but rarely first
- Strong on one question type, missing from the others
- Visible on one platform, gone on another
- A program, place or project you're proud of barely appears
- A competitor's site is cited more often than yours

Each pattern points to a different fix.

The right one depends on your brand, your category and the sources AI trusts. That's where strategy starts.

TRY IT NOW

15 minutes

A quick self-check you can run today

1. Pick five questions from your list, mixing category, occasion, comparison and place.
2. Ask each one on ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini.
3. Note whether you're named, whether you're first, who appears alongside you and which sources are cited.
4. Read how AI describes you. Is it accurate, current and in your words?

This is a snapshot, not a baseline: answers shift by platform, by wording and by day. But most brands learn something within minutes, and it shows which questions deserve tracking.

STEP 03 · PLAN

Turn every gap into a story, a voice and a channel

Agree one sentence of strategic narrative that the whole plan serves. Then turn each priority gap from your audit into a story, the voice best placed to tell it and the channels that will carry it.

THE STORY
What AI is missing about you, told in a way an editor wants to run.

THE VOICE
The sommelier, chef, critic, founder or travel writer best placed to tell it.

THE CHANNELS
Earned, owned, social and trade, every action traced to an objective.

Tell both stories

PRODUCT-FIRST

What makes it exceptional

How it's made, where it comes from, who makes it. Builds credibility.

Answers "Who makes the best [varietal] in [region]?" or "Who has the best tasting menu in [city]?"

EXPERIENCE-FIRST

Where it fits into someone's life

The bottle to open or give, the table to book, the place to stay or visit. Creates a reason to choose it.

Answers "What should I bring to a special dinner?"

Product stories establish credibility. Experience stories create more chances to be discovered.

STEP 03 · PLAN, CONTINUED

Rethink your media list

TRADITIONAL	AI-INFORMED	BUILD THE LIST
Reach & prestige	**Authority & relevance**	**Start from your audit**
Major publications, audience size, high-profile placements	Subject-matter voices, niche titles and Substacks, trade experts, sources AI already cites	Pull the outlets AI cites, keep top critics supplied, add specialists

Keep the major titles. Add the sources that shape the answer.

YOU'LL HAVE A findings-to-actions plan.

STEP 04 · ACTIVATE

Carry one narrative across every channel

Turn the plan into a calendar. For each priority question, it sets out the story angle, the people to pitch and the moment that gives the story a reason to run.

One narrative

Earned, owned, social and trade tell the same story at the same time.

The right voices

The sommelier, critic, chef or travel writer who reaches the sources AI trusts.

A steady rhythm

Pitch steadily, not once. Recency counts in what AI cites.

YOU'LL HAVE A pitch calendar.

STEP 05 · EVOLVE

Ask the same questions again

Re-run your locked question list every month and report against the baseline, using the same measures so change is easy to see.

SAME QUESTIONS, SAME MEASURES

A locked question list and a fixed baseline make it possible to see what actually moved.

READ IT IN CONTEXT

Look at the results alongside coverage, engagement, trade response and sales.

Patience Expect change over months, not days. Stories need to run and be picked up before they show in AI answers.

YOU'LL HAVE A monthly report that shows what moved and why.

START THIS MONTH

Four quick wins

While your baseline builds, these fixes are usually within reach in the first few weeks.

1 **A readable page per product or experience**

Tasting notes, menus, pairings, prices and scores in page text, not PDFs.

2 **A Critical Acclaim page**

Scores, reviews and awards by product, publication and date, in one place AI can find.

3 **One bio, everywhere**

The same current story and facts on every site, listing and press kit.

4 **Open the doors to AI**

Let AI crawlers read every site you own, and publish hours, reservations and directions.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Can we just pay to show up in AI?	No. Paid and advertorial content makes up 0.3% of what AI cites. Visibility has to be earned.
Isn't this just SEO?	SEO works on your own pages. AI answers lean heavily on journalism, critics and trade sources, which is communications territory. A complete approach covers both.
How fast will we see change?	Over months, not days. Stories need to run and be picked up, which is why monthly tracking against a baseline matters.
Can anyone guarantee we'll be named first?	No one can, and be wary of anyone who promises it. What you can expect is a tracked baseline, a plan aimed at specific gaps and honest reporting.
Does this replace our PR program?	It sharpens it: the same discipline, aimed at the questions and sources that now shape what your customers are told.

LET'S TALK

Let's find out what AI is saying about you

Colangelo & Partners helps wine, spirits, food and hospitality brands shape what AI tells their audiences. We build your question list, track what ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini say about you every day, and turn the gaps into an integrated earned, owned, social and trade program, reported monthly against your baseline.

Book a short intro call. We'll come prepared.

Before we talk, we'll put your top customer questions to ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini, so you'll see:

1
What AI says about your brand today

2
Who it recommends instead

3
Which sources it relies on

Then we'll talk through your goals and how to close the gaps.

Book an intro call >

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