skout SUSO

Named, not cited

How visible are 101 HR brands in AI search?

A Skout and SUSO study | November 2026

Introduction

Generative AI is rapidly becoming a new route to market for HR brands. Buyers are turning to AI tools to research suppliers, compare solutions and shortlist providers before they ever visit a website.

Yet most HR organisations have little understanding of how visible they are and how they compare to their competitors.

This report reveals how 101 HR brands perform when AI is asked the kinds of questions real HR buyers ask. It explores which brands are winning visibility, which categories have the strongest presence, where citations come from, and why some organisations are consistently surfaced while others remain virtually invisible.

The findings expose a significant gap between being mentioned and being cited. Across the HR sector, AI is far more likely to name a brand than link to it directly, creating a new visibility challenge that extends beyond traditional SEO.

Success in AI search is increasingly shaped by reputation, third-party coverage, comparison content and category authority.

For HR marketers and business leaders, AI visibility is becoming a competitive advantage.

This report is designed to help you understand where your brand stands, who is winning attention in AI search, and what it takes to become part of the answers AI gives to HR buyers.

Executive summary

AI names HR brands far more often than it links to them

16.6%

AI visibility is scarce. The average brand appears in just one AI answer in six, and 27 of the 101 brands fall below 5%, making them effectively invisible.

5%

Being named but not cited. Seven in ten brand appearances carry no link to the brand's own website. The average citation score is just 5%.

4.6x

Category shapes the opportunity. Average visibility runs from 33% in job boards to 7.1% in wellbeing, but the strongest brands beat their category average by more than three times.

55%

Third parties are writing the shortlist. 55% of citations to the most cited sources came from other vendors' content vs 6% citations from the brand's own site.

What it means: AI visibility is won largely on other people's websites. That makes GEO a reputation and earned-visibility challenge as much as a content or technical one.

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What we measured

We asked six AI engines the questions UK HR buyers ask

101
HR brands competing for UK buyers

15
HR categories, from core HR to wellbeing

50
non-branded buyer questions per category

6
AI engines, tested over three days

How we scored it

Visibility: the share of AI answers that name (mention) a brand and/or link to its website (citation).

Mention: the share of AI answers that name a brand.

Citation score: the share of AI answers that link to the brand's own website.

Engines: ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, Grok, Google AI Overview and Google AI Mode, weighted equally.

How to read the results

- The same 50 questions were asked for brands in the same category, so comparisons within a category are like for like.
- Categories had different questions, so comparisons between them are indicative.
- Scores are corrected where a brand name is also an everyday word, using sample checks of AI answers.
- ChatGPT data comes from a single partial day.
- Questions were run over three days (29-31 October 2026).

The headline

The average HR brand appears in just one AI answer in six

27 brands (26.7%) are effectively invisible, achieving below 5% AI visibility. 32 brands achieve 20% or more.

The market is top-heavy. The median sits below the average, with 10 brands achieving 30% of all visibility in the study.

Being well known isn't enough. Even among established HR brands, AI visibility remains limited.

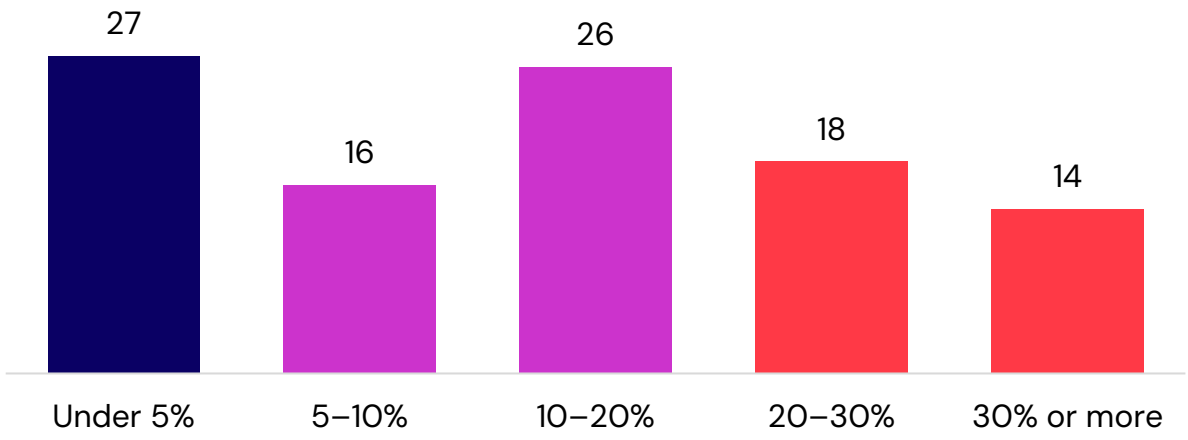
16.6%
average visibility

13.2%
median brand

5.0%
average citation

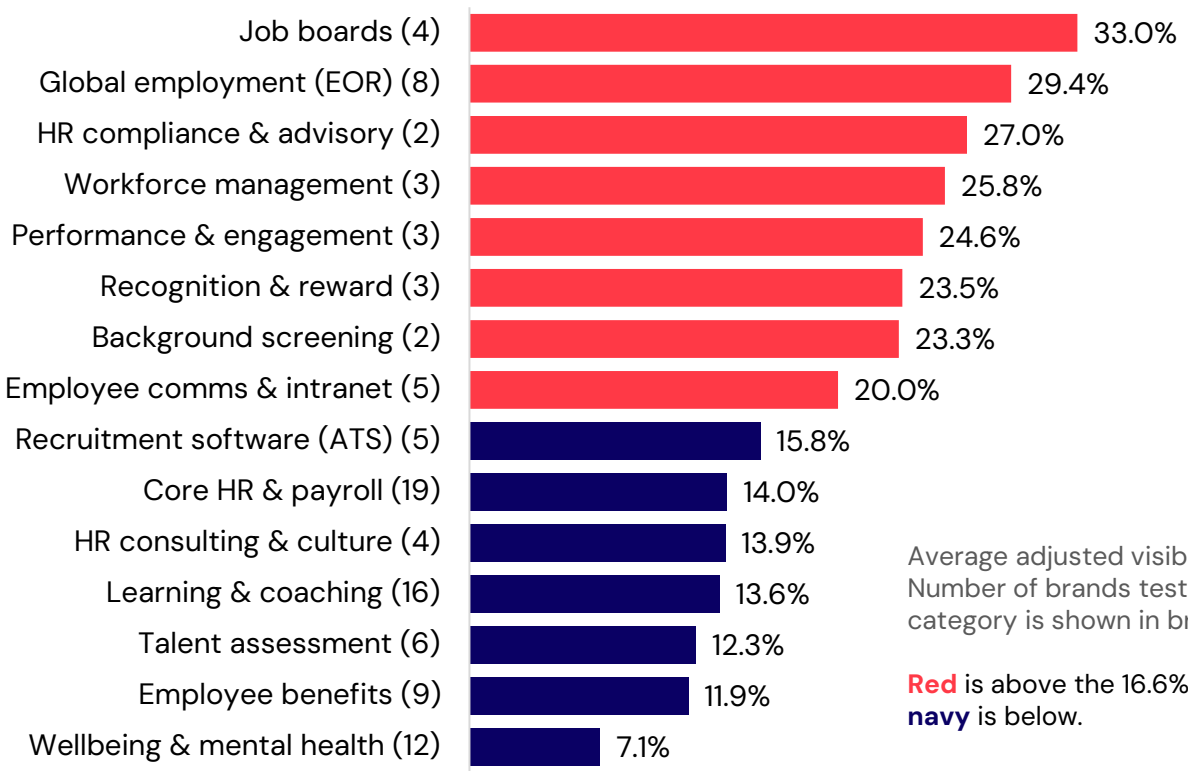
11.6%
average mention

Number of brands by visibility score



Categories

Visibility varies almost fivefold by HR category



Average adjusted visibility.
Number of brands tested in each category is shown in brackets.

Red is above the 16.6% study average, **navy** is below.

33.0%
Job boards

7.1%
Wellbeing

Some categories are more visible to AI than others.

Strong leaders lift a category: Indeed in job boards and Deel in global employment.

Categories with a small number of dominant brands appear to perform better than those categories that are fragmented. Wisdom Wellbeing leads a low visibility category but is 3.5x more visible than its category average.

Punching above their weight

Winning because of your category, or despite it

Visibility index shows how a brand performs against its category average (100 = category average)

Despite the category

Wisdom Wellbeing scores 25.2% against the category average of 7.1%. Coursera's visibility is 4.7x its category average.

With the category

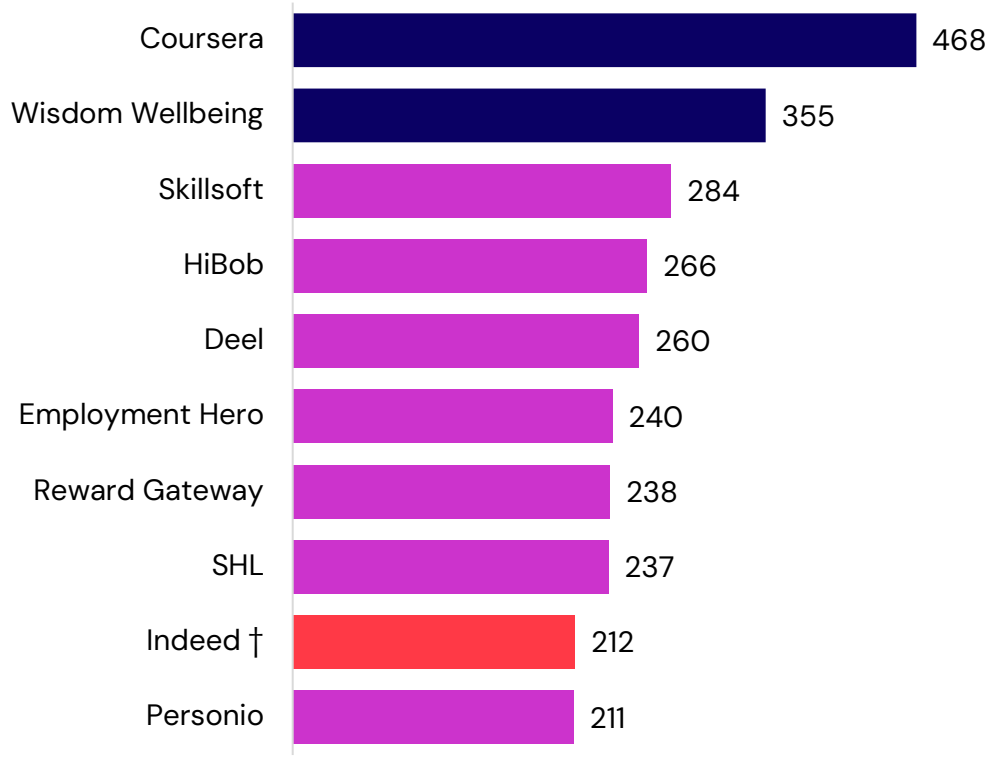
Indeed is second with a brand visibility score of 69.9%. Yet its index score of 212 puts it ninth when compared to its category average.

Leadership clusters

HiBob, Employment Hero and Personio form a leadership cluster in core HR, each more than double the category average.

Category leadership

Reward Gateway and SHL miss the brand top 10 but lead their own fields.



Why categories differ

AI seems more at ease with certainty than judgement

Where AI has clear answers

Job boards 33.0% | Global employment 29.4% | HR compliance 27.0%

- A few recognisable category leaders
- Educational questions with direct answers, such as “What is an employer of record?”
- Rules and legal frameworks that give AI something definite to say

Where judgement decides

Wellbeing 7.1% | HR consulting and culture 13.9% | ATS 15.8%

- Crowded fields where no single player owns the conversation
- Wellbeing spans EAPs, mental health, coaching and financial wellbeing
- Subjective, context-dependent advice, where AI may answer directly rather than recommend a supplier

Top 10 brands

AI is creating outsized winners

Every brand in the top 10 is at least twice as visible as the average brand in the study. Deel and Indeed are more than four times as visible.

Job boards, core HR & payroll, and global employment dominate.

Benefits, wellbeing, recognition, assessment, consulting and compliance are absent.

Learning & coaching has two top-10 brands – Coursera and Skillsoft.

A strong category is no guarantee of AI visibility: HR compliance ranks third on the category list, yet has no brand in the top 10.

#	Brand	Category	Visibility	Citation score
1	Deel	Global employment (EOR)	76.4%	27.9%
2	Indeed †	Job boards	69.9%	16.6%
3	Coursera	Learning & coaching	63.6%	1.0%
4	Remote †	Global employment (EOR)	61.0%	22.3%
5	CV-Library	Job boards	44.1%	9.3%
6	Deputy †	Workforce management	42.1%	13.7%
7	Skillsoft	Learning & coaching	38.6%	0.3%
8	HiBob	Core HR & payroll	37.3%	13.0%
9	Staffbase	Employee comms & intranet	36.3%	13.6%
10	Employment Hero	Core HR & payroll	33.6%	6.5%

† Brand name is also an everyday word, so mentions may include non-brand uses. Citation scores confirm real visibility.

Named, not cited

Seven in ten appearances carry no link to the brand's site

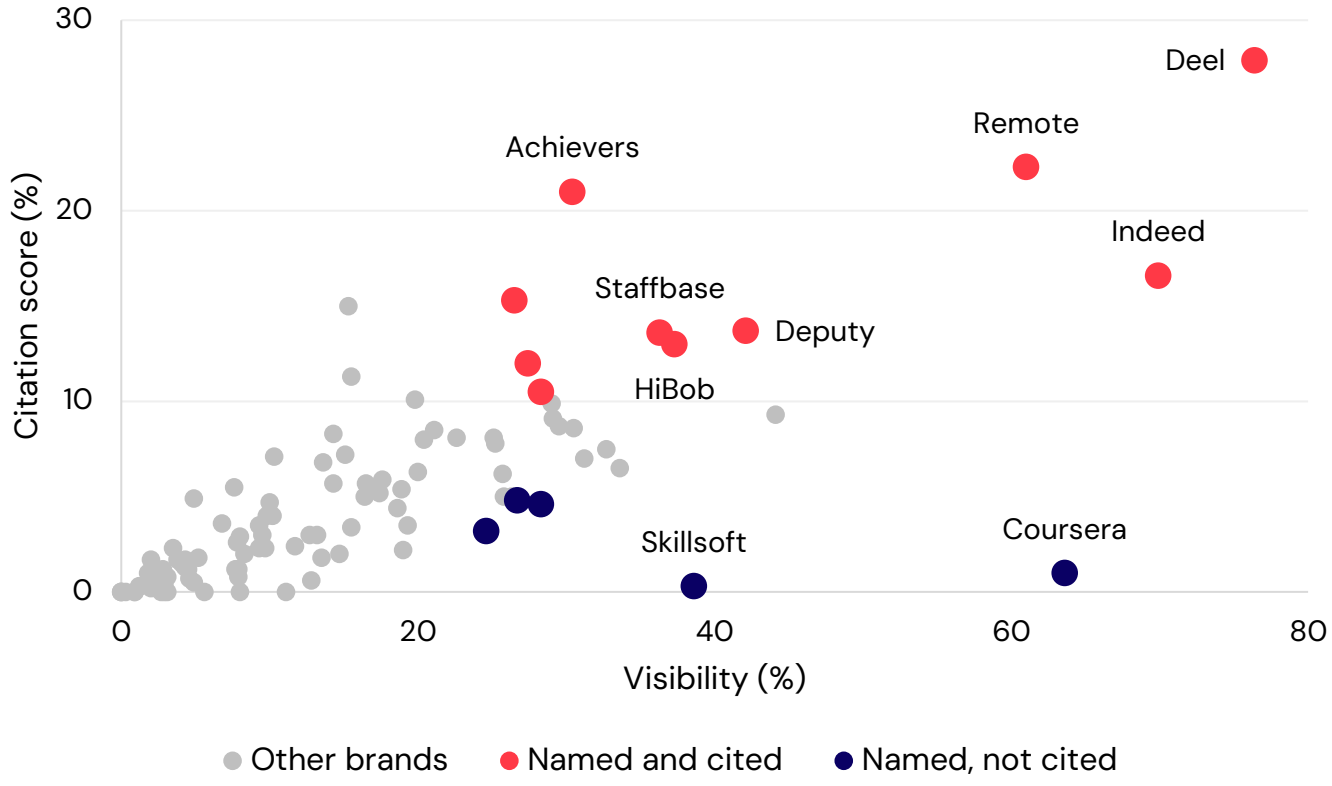
70%

of brand appearances have no link to the brand's own site

Only 10 brands combine 20%+ visibility with a 10%+ citation score. Deel, Remote, HiBob and Staffbase suggest strong content ecosystems and authority signals.

Five brands reach 20%+ visibility, but with citations under 5%. Coursera and Skillsoft have awareness without attribution.

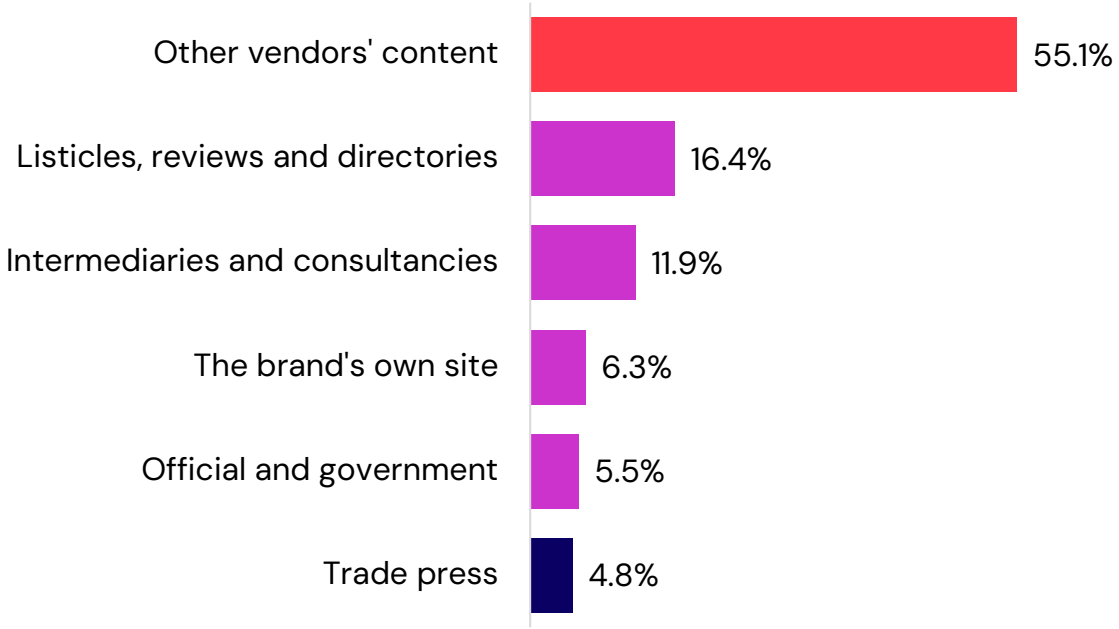
Optimising your own website alone isn't enough. SEO should be your foundation, with GEO adding structured, quotable content, and a deliberate presence on third party sites.



What AI reads

Other vendors' content dominates the sources that AI cites most

Most cited domains by source type



No source is decisive

Each category draws on between 647 and 1,173 domains, and no single domain takes more than 9.3% of citations. Breadth of presence matters.

Who shows up

Vendors: Workforce.com takes 9.3% of workforce management citations

Lists: KlearSkill takes 4.0% in ATS

Intermediaries: Going Private UK takes 5.6% in benefits

Official: gov.uk takes 6.2% in screening

Buyer guides rule

AI answers lean on whoever has written the most useful comparison pages, whether or not they are the category leader.

Data is based on the top 6–8 domains per category, which hold 9–23% of each category's citations.

Sources by category

Each HR category has its own influential sources

Category	Most cited	Second	Third
Job boards	talentfinderuk.co.uk (3.6%)	uk.indeed.com (2.2%)	workinsiders.com (2.1%)
Global employment (EOR)	peoplemanagingpeople.com (3.6%)	deel.com (3.4%)	payoneer.com (3.3%)
HR compliance & advisory	peninsulagrouplimited.com (2.4%)	keygroupservices.com (1.7%)	acas.org.uk (1.6%)
Workforce management	workforce.com (9.3%)	lilachbullock.com (3.8%)	ordio.com (2.9%)
Performance & engagement	staffcircle.com (3.5%)	hrmanagement365.com (3.2%)	factorial.com (2.6%)
Recognition & reward	huggg.me (4.4%)	achievers.com (4.2%)	awardco.com (3.4%)
Background screening	gov.uk (6.2%)	globalhrworld.com (3.7%)	experian.co.uk (3.7%)
Employee comms & intranet	oak.com (7.5%)	poppulo.com (5.6%)	mangoapps.com (2.8%)
Recruitment software (ATS)	employmenthero.com (4.7%)	klearskill.com (4.0%)	lilachbullock.com (3.4%)
Core HR & payroll	zelt.app (3.4%)	iris.co.uk (3.2%)	workforce.com (2.6%)
HR consulting & culture	rewardassociates.co.uk (3.8%)	hrdatahub.com (1.5%)	edgecumbe.co.uk (1.4%)
Learning & coaching	growthengineering.co.uk (2.9%)	disprz.ai (2.4%)	capytech.co.uk (1.4%)
Talent assessment	sapia.ai (1.8%)	cohesyve.com (1.6%)	gov.uk (1.5%)
Employee benefits	goingprivateuk.co.uk (5.6%)	drewberryinsurance.co.uk (2.9%)	netzerohomescheme.com (2.8%)
Wellbeing & mental health	championhealth.co.uk (2.6%)	360-wellbeing.co.uk (2.4%)	goingprivateuk.co.uk (2.4%)

What leaders share

The most visible brands share five characteristics

1

They own the category, not just a product

Deel leads the study at 76.4%, and Deel and Remote have become the names AI reaches for in global employment.

2

They answer common buyer questions

Employment Hero's guides are the most-cited source in ATS answers, at 4.7% of citations, outside its own category.

3

They are talked about everywhere

Coursera's visibility is 63.6% with a citation score of 1%: its visibility is built almost entirely beyond its own site.

4

They have built a large digital footprint

Peninsula's website has the 5th highest citation score at 15.3%. It's the most-cited source in HR compliance answers, with 33 pages cited.

5

They help buyers compare options

Achievers' website, (which includes its own guide to recognition platforms) is the 2nd most cited source in its category.

Technical access

Technical hygiene is necessary, but not the difference

Almost nobody is locking AI out.

Only 2 of 101 brands block a checked crawler, and neither is in the high-visibility tier.

Page speed shows no pattern by visibility, and llms.txt is only slightly more common among leaders.

Get the basics right, then focus on what is said about you.

	High (20%+)	Mid (5–20%)	Low (under 5%)
Brands checked	32	42	27
Blocking any checked AI crawler	0	2	0
With an llms.txt file	56%	50%	44%
Average mobile speed score	46	49	47
Average desktop speed score	64	64	69

AI engines

Success on one AI engine doesn't guarantee success on another

1 in 3
brands see a 20+ point visibility gap between AIs

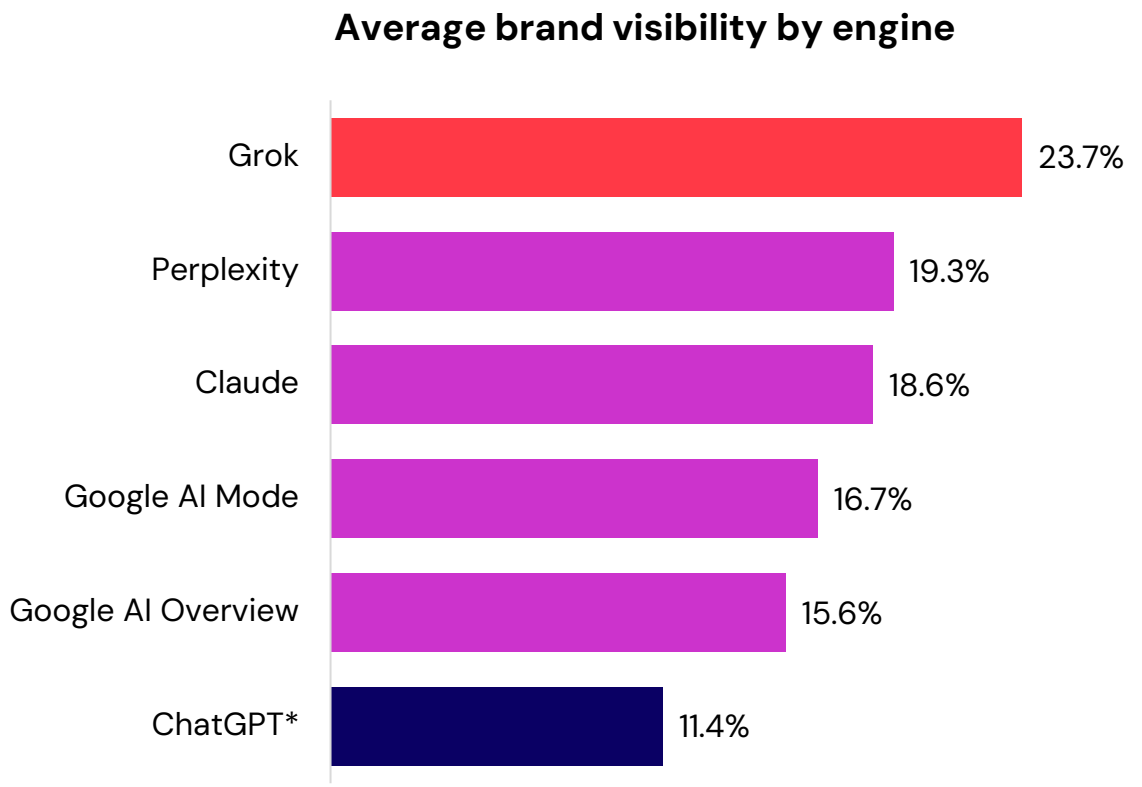
9
brands score 0% on one engine, but 10%+ on another

Don't optimise for one AI over another

The average brand's best AI beats its worst by 17 points.

Grok and Perplexity name brands more generously than other AIs. Grok is the best AI for 37 brands, and Perplexity for 29 of our HR 101 brands.

A single-engine check can flatter you or hide a real gap.



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* ChatGPT data recorded on a single partial day. Chart shows scores before name corrections. Callouts cover 98 brands, excluding three with corrected names.

The challenges

Five GEO challenges facing HR brands

Your website is rarely the source	Rivals are writing the shortlist	Winners take most	Home strength doesn't travel	No engine tells the whole story
The average citation score is 5% against 16.6% visibility. Twelve brands have a citation score of zero.	Other vendors' content ranks first in 10 of 15 categories. Comparisons shape who gets named.	The top 10 brands hold 30% of all visibility, and 58 brands sit below their category's average.	Six brands focused on markets outside the UK, all score below 5% on UK buyer questions.	34 brands see a 20-point visibility swing between engines, so one engine can give a false picture.

The common thread: AI builds its shortlists from what others publish about a category, not from what brands say about themselves.

What to do

Five ways to earn AI visibility

1

Make your site worth quoting

Publish buyer guides and comparisons with facts AI can reuse: pricing, compliance, integrations and original research.

2

Earn a place on the lists AI reads

Audit comparison lists, review sites and intermediaries cited in your category, then earn inclusion through PR and partners.

3

Own the category narrative

Become synonymous with a specific HR problem. Publish research and repeat position with analysts, media and customers.

4

Localise your authority

Build UK proof points: local case studies, spokespeople and coverage with the trade titles and bodies UK buyers trust.

5

Measure engine by engine

Track each AI engine and buyer questions separately. Direct effort to the visibility gaps and engines that matter most.

HR 101 brands

The most visible brands*

30%+
14 brands

- Achievers †
- Coursera
- Culture Amp
- CV-Library
- Deel
- Deputy †
- Employment Hero
- Greenhouse
- HiBob
- Indeed †
- Papaya Global
- Remote †
- Skillsoft
- Staffbase

20 - 30%
18 brands

- ADP
- Citation †
- Factorial
- First Advantage
- Korn Ferry
- Lattice
- Oyster
- Peninsula Group
- Perkbox Vivup
- Personio
- Reward Gateway
- Rippling
- SHL
- TalentLMS
- Wisdom Wellbeing
- Workable †
- Workhuman
- Workvivo

10 - 20%
26 brands

- Ben †
- Benevity
- Benifex
- BetterUp
- Caterer.com
- Cornerstone
- Docebo
- Eightfold AI
- Fourth †
- G-P
- HireRight
- iCIMS
- IRIS Software Group
- LumApps
- MHR
- Optima Health
- Planday
- Pluxee
- Thomas International †
- UKG
- Unily
- Visier
- Vitality †
- Wellhub
- Workday
- WTW

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* Click here to download the full list of 101 HR brands

HR 101 brands

The long tail: under 10%*



* Click here to download the full list of 101 HR brands

Alphabetical within each visibility band.
† Name is also an everyday word, so placement is approximate.
Six brands in the lowest band have a main market outside the UK.

What the experts say

What three GEO actions would you take in the first 90 days?



Claire James, MD at Skout

Measure your AI visibility and identify your authority gap – know where you are starting from and what you need to fix.

Build **one clear area of category authority** – don't try to do everything, everywhere all at once. Remain focused.

Increase independent validation, not just content production - create more evidence that other credible organisations trust your expertise.



Jamie Stanley, CMO at SUSO

Fix access first. Check AI crawlers can reach your site and that your key facts sit in the page HTML, not in PDFs, images or scripts.

Make your own site the reference for your facts. Rebuild the pages buyers' questions depend on, with named experts and the facts stated plainly.

Publish a comparison before a competitor does. An honest buyer's guide to your category, alternatives included, because AI leans heavily on comparison content when it builds a shortlist.



Theophile Gourment, Solutions Consultant Director at Onclusive

Day 1 - 30: Start your monitoring (since there is no historical data with LLMs) to build a baseline of metrics and brand identity according to LLMs.

Day 31 - 60: Diagnose your gaps (e.g., missing citation sources, perception issues…)

Day 61 - 90: Iterate. Now that you've acted on the insights, return to your measurement to see the impact and refine your strategy. Repeat!

SUSO skout

Don't let competitors win the GEO race

Contact us to discuss an audit of your GEO performance and needs.

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