

THE 4 KEY CHALLENGES OF AI SEARCH MEASUREMENT



AI search introduces a new set of challenges for measuring performance. Adapting to these challenges is essential to succeed in an evolving landscape, and traditional SEO alone won't suffice.

Let's explore what they are – and how to tackle them.

1. MEASURING BRAND VISIBILITY, NOT TRAFFIC

Challenge

AI search generally drives less traffic and leads to fewer clicks than traditional search. Therefore, long-standing metrics like rankings, click-through rate, and links no longer reflect performance.



Key shift: Measure brand awareness and presence, not clicks.

What to do instead

- Track brand mentions in LLM responses, not just clicks
- Clearly define:
 - What counts as your brand
 - Who your true search competitors are
- Benchmark against your competitors, not historical SEO data

Top tip: Need help figuring out who your true competitors are? Check out our blog on how to [smoke out the competition with smart segmentation & share of voice](#).

2. DEFINING WHAT COUNTS AS “RANKING”

Challenge

There's no clear #1 position in AI search, meaning a brand mentioned first isn't always the “winner.”



Key shift: Don't rely solely on ranking or links as a measure of brand presence.

What to do instead

- Use a variety of visibility metrics, such as:
 - **Presence:** How often your brand appears in responses
 - **Average depth:** The average position of your first brand mention
- Use prompt response history to analyze how responses have evolved over time

3. SHIFTING FOCUS FROM KEYWORDS TO PROMPTS

Challenge

Users don't typically search in AI tools with short, traditional keywords – they use long, conversational prompts.



Key shift: Consider topics, not just individual keywords.

What to do instead

- Focus on:
 - Informational prompts – e.g., “How do I make pizza dough?”
 - Comparison queries – e.g., “Is 00 flour or plain flour better for pizza dough?”
 - Branded and competitor prompts – e.g., “Does Domino's make their own pizza dough?”

4. ADJUSTING TO VARIABLE SEARCH RESPONSES

Challenge

AI search responses are constantly changing depending on the user, time, and context.

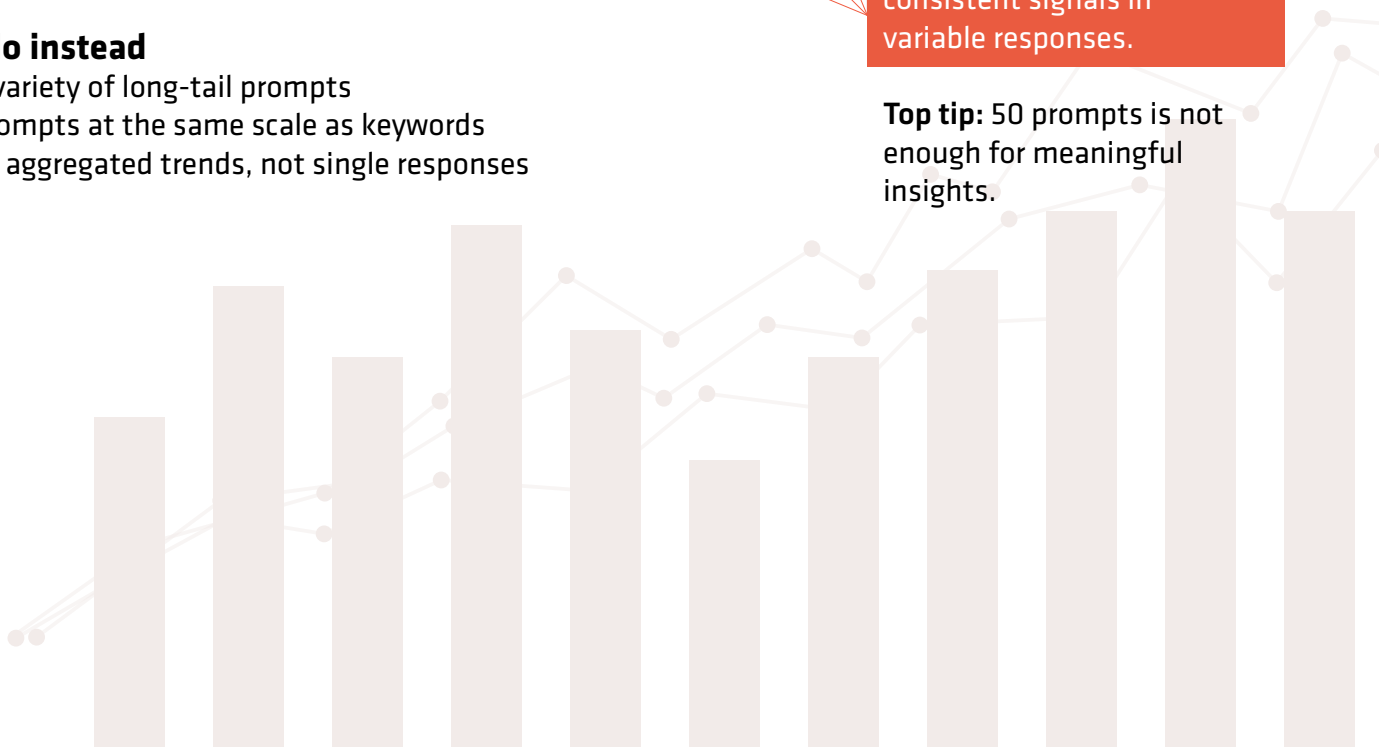


Key shift: Use broad sampling to pinpoint consistent signals in variable responses.

What to do instead

- Track a variety of long-tail prompts
- Track prompts at the same scale as keywords
- Analyze aggregated trends, not single responses

Top tip: 50 prompts is not enough for meaningful insights.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Success in AI search isn't all about ranking #1. It's about your brand being present, prominent, and preferred across a wide range of queries.

By adjusting your measurement, you can track performance more effectively and position yourself to act on new opportunities as they arise.