YESPRESS

The Public Record Advantage

Why Tech Companies Must Engineer Their Own Narrative in the Age of AI Answer Engines

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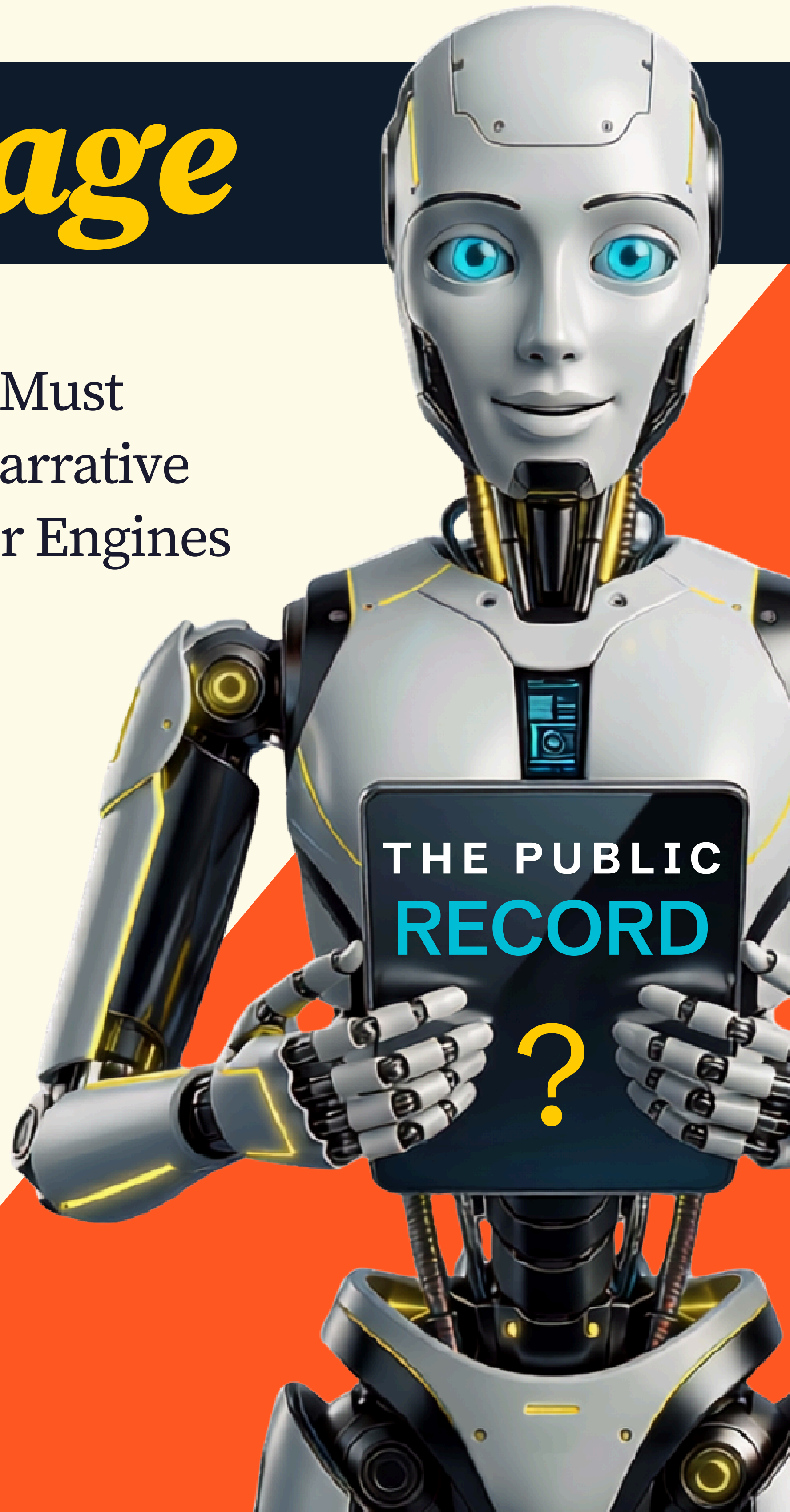

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Executive Summary

The B2B technology buyer has fundamentally changed. By the time a prospect contacts your sales team, most of their decision is already made. Decisions are often shaped less by your pitch deck and more by whatever narrative exists in the public record about your company.

That record is no longer simply search results. It now includes synthesized answers produced by ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI Overviews, Claude, Copilot, and a growing ecosystem of AI answer engines that draw on whatever content they can find and trust. Importantly, third-party coverage often outweighs and is typically favored over owned digital properties in AI-generated responses.

For enterprises, mid-market companies, and startups alike, this creates both a crisis and an opportunity. If AI engines can't find authoritative, third-party, and well-structured evidence of your customers' successes, they will fill the void with competitor narratives, or worse, silence. Companies that systematically produce editorial-quality customer success stories and "sparklers" (brief, punchy proof points) can influence what AI engines learn and cite, creating a compounding visibility advantage that becomes difficult for competitors to displace.

This white paper examines five interconnected imperatives for building your company's public record.

Five Interconnected Imperatives

#	Imperative	Description
01	AI Answer Engine Visibility	Stay visible in search and AI answer engines.
02	Editorial Rigor	Craft on-brand stories with editorial rigor.
03	Always-On Strategy	Maintain an always-on cadence across buying cycles.
04	Budget Efficiency	Stay in budget through efficient asset architecture and smart spending.
05	Asset Transformation	Transform existing assets into multipurpose narratives.

Drawing on current industry data, expert perspectives, and real-world examples, we argue that the public record now demands the same intentionality and investment as any go-to-market motion.

01. AI Answer Engine Visibility

Winning in Search and AI Answer Engines

The ground has shifted. Traditional SEO earned page-one rankings on Google. SEO is not dead, just insufficient. A new layer has emerged: Generative Engine Optimization (GEO), or Answer Engine Optimization, ensures your brand surfaces when AI platforms like ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI Overviews, Claude, Copilot, and others answer queries about your company and category.

Similarweb's 2026 Generative AI Brand Visibility Index shows 35% of U.S. consumers now use AI tools at product discovery versus just 14% relying on traditional search.

This shift has reached enterprise decision-making. Buyers now form preferences anonymously before contacting sellers. 6sense found that 80% of B2B deals go to the vendor they favored before engaging anyone. That preference forms in AI answer engines, not on vendor websites.

> *35% of US buyers now use AI tools at product discovery versus just 14% relying on traditional search.*
>
> SIMILARWEB 2006 GENERATIVE AI BRAND VISIBILITY INDEX

The citation economy. The overlap between top Google results and AI-cited sources is simultaneously collapsing. Brandlight's research shows it has fallen from roughly 70% in early 2024 to below 20%, and the decline is accelerating. Google's own AI Overviews still lean on organic rankings, but for engines like ChatGPT and Gemini, the two surfaces have effectively decoupled. AI engines favor independent, third-party content. Owned domains lack the credibility AI answer engines reward. This drives the need for earned coverage, case studies, and third-party mentions that engines can discover, trust, and cite.

AI engines don't simply cite the highest-traffic sources. They evaluate for authority, relevance, and independence, which means a third-party case study can outrank a vendor's own homepage. Those citations establish your presence in the knowledge base AI draws from, shaping how it answers questions like "Compare fintech vendors for bank treasury innovation" or "Compare AI healthtech platforms for hospital networks".

What this means for tech companies. Visibility requires authoritative, third-party content in the public record: customer success stories, thought leadership, and materials AI engines can discover and cite. Press releases and blogs on owned domains won't suffice. The gap between brands that invest now and those that wait will widen because citations compound as engines learn from what they've previously cited.

02. Editorial Rigor

Crafting On-Brand Stories That Convert

Why most customer stories fail. When done well, customer success stories are among the most influential assets in B2B marketing. According to the Content Marketing Institute (2025), case studies significantly influence purchasing decisions for 73% of B2B decision makers. Yet many are dull, formulaic, and centered on the vendor, not the customer, falling short at the moment buyers are deciding.

The editorial standard. Audience-centered case studies with editorial rigor drive greater engagement, memorability, and pipeline.

Structuring High-Performing Narratives

#	Principle	Why It Matters
01	Position the customer as the hero.	Buyers identify with peers solving real problems, not a list of features
02	Lead with measurable outcomes.	"Reduced time to general availability by 89 days" carries more weight than solution rhetoric
03	Include authentic, specific quotes.	Quotes should reveal decision-making and tradeoffs, not generic praise
04	Use a clear narrative structure.	Challenge, tension, resolution, and outcome keep humans engaged and provide structure AI can extract

Stories built around these elements win with buyers, and better position your content for AI engine citations.

Sparklers: proof points that light up the funnel. Not every customer story needs to be 2,000 words. Sparklers are short, high-impact, quotable insights or metrics that radiate from customer stories, serving as memorable snippets for prospects and AI-citable fragments.

Well-crafted, audience-centered stories and sparklers fuel sales enablement toolkits with repeatable narratives. Together, they help sales leaders emotionally connect B2B buyers with your value proposition, strengthen credibility, accelerate sales cycles, and increase conversion.

03. Always-On Strategy

Engaging Across Extended Sales Cycles

Death of the campaign mindset. With a vast majority of B2B buyers out of market at any given time, traditional campaign models fail. Buyers don't operate on your content calendar. They research silently and emerge ready to engage, often with a preferred vendor.

Going dark between campaigns cedes ground to competitors that never stop publishing. An always-on content strategy isn't luxury; it's survival. Brands with a steady cadence of fresh, relevant proof points remain present in buyer memory and AI engine citations when the buying moment arrives.

The always-on content engine. This doesn't mean churning out content unnecessarily. It means sustaining a continuous flow of real-voice insights showcasing how customers and partners bring your value proposition to life through credible sources beyond owned channels and properties. According to B2B International's 2024 Superpowers Index, "being an active thought leader in the category and sector" jumped from 20th to 3rd globally as a critical factor shaping B2B buying decisions.

According to LinkedIn, thought leadership visible in third-party digital locations generates 67% more qualified leads compared to those using only owned media. Most B2B marketers recognize the importance of thought leadership and seek to leverage it for lead generation and share of voice, but many miss the compounded advantage of third-party visibility. Additionally, the public record rewards more than volume. It favors a constantly running editorial engine.

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>
> LINKEDIN

Recency matters. Technology categories move quickly. Publishing a strong case study six months ago but failing to continue adding to the public record may trigger AI engines to move on to fresher sources. Every sparkler you publish is a potential citation source; every customer story placed in the public record is your discoverable narrative.

An always-on, third-party content engine with editorial rigor ensures your brand remains part of the conversation buyers and machines are having.

04. Budget Efficiency

Economics of the Public Record

The ROI case for AI-friendly customer story investment. B2B marketing budgets are under intensifying scrutiny. The era of nice-to-have content is over; spending must contribute to pipeline, revenue, or durable brand equity. Content, when done right, supports acquisition, retention, and advocacy.

Content marketing generates an average of $3 for every $1 invested, compared to $1.80 for paid advertising (Content Marketing Institute).

According to Bain and LinkedIn research, 81% of B2B buyers choose a brand they recognized on Day 1 of their buying journey. Visibility and familiarity are prerequisites for conversion, not outcomes of it.

> *81% of B2B buyers choose a brand they recognized on Day 1 of their buying journey.*
>
> BAIN AND LINKEDIN

Doing more with less, intelligently. Budget constraints do not require quality compromises. Efficiencies come from structure rather than shortcuts.

The goal is to spend smarter on assets serving multiple purposes and strengthening the public record over time.

Spending Smart

Strategy	Description
Reusable Content Architectures	One deep customer interview yields a case study, sparklers, social activation, sales enablement assets, and AI-citable proof points
AI-Assisted Workflows	McKinsey research finds that AI tools can increase marketing content productivity by 20-30%
Retention-Focused Content	Customer stories reinforce existing buyers while convincing new ones

05. Asset Transformation

Turning What You Have into What You Need

The hidden content economy. Most companies are sitting on a goldmine of underutilized content: conference talks, slide decks rich with insights, customer call recordings that never became stories, webinar transcripts full of quotes, internal documentation that could be reframed as thought leadership, product or engineering notes that could become sparklers and customer-facing narratives.

Research from Floodlight New Marketing's 2026 Content Audit Guide suggests 40 to 60% of existing content in typical B2B organizations is underperforming. This is not about wrong ideas. Assets are often not discoverable, in the wrong format, or distributed through the wrong channels. Content audits identify dormant assets and unlock value without the cost of creating net-new material.

The transformation playbook. This is not simple repurposing. Copy-paste content without editorial refinement or channel-specific adjustments does not suffice. It means taking a customer interview transcript or a 45-minute webinar and shaping them into journalistic stories and sparklers.

This approach reduces cost per asset, improves cross-channel message consistency, transforms dormant assets into citable content, and increases the volume and quality of public-record content AI engines can discover and cite.

From underperforming to compelling. Consider a common scenario: a product manager delivers a 40-slide internal deck explaining the inspiration behind a new feature, showcasing example use cases, and capturing customer quotes from design thinking sessions. The deck sits on a shared drive until needed for a sales call, while the call recording stays buried in video conference archives, never repurposed for external audiences.

Through editorial transformation, that deck and its corresponding transcript can yield a content series structured for AI engine citation and audience memorability:

- A case study showing how a beta customer used the feature to achieve measurable outcomes
- Three to five sparklers highlighting specific metrics or quotes
- A thought leadership article or LinkedIn post on the industry problem the feature solves
- Talking points for the executive team's next press interview
- Conversation highlights for a sales rep's pitch deck

One source. Multiple outputs. Today's technology helps companies contribute to the public record at a fraction of the cost of net-new creation, while serving the dual purpose of creating memorable and citable sparklers.

The YesPress Framework

Building the Public Record AI Learns From

A unified approach. The five imperatives outlined in this white paper are not independent tactics. Together they form an integrated framework that treats a company's public record as a strategic asset: one requiring sustained, editorially rigorous, budget-conscious investment leveraging reputable and third-party sources.

Addressing the Five Imperatives with YesPress

Imperative	What YesPress Addresses	Outcomes with YesPress
Answer Engine Visibility	Buyers form preferences before engaging sales; AI engines mediate discovery	Brand appears in AI-generated answers across user queries
Editorial Rigor	AI engines favor third-party, structured, and authoritative content	Customer stories that drive conversion and earn AI citations
Always-on Mandate	Long B2B sales cycles need continuous presence, not episodic campaigns	Remain present in AI citations throughout extended buying journey
Smarter Spending	CMOs face intense ROI scrutiny, and content must prove its worth	Smart repurposing and architecture bring more ROI at fractional cost
Asset Performance	Existing company assets are often underperforming and underutilized	Dormant assets become purpose-built, multi-format narratives

Why This Matters Now

The urgency behind this framework comes from the convergence of three main forces impacting how technology companies must address how to manage the sales funnel.

The AI Discovery Shift. AI answer engines are becoming a primary interface for discovery, evaluation, and shortlisting. Brands that populate the public record with authoritative, well-structured, third-party content are the brands AI engines often cite. Those that don't risk being invisible when it matters most.

The Buyer Autonomy Shift. With 67% of B2B purchasing decisions made before first contact with sales (Forrester, 2025) and 80% of deals won by the vendor the buyer preferred before engaging (6sense, 2025), content encountered during independent research becomes your sales pitch.

The Credibility Shift. Only 25% of B2B buyers believe the brands they engage with are doing thought leadership well (B2B International, 2024). There is a credibility vacuum, and it can be filled by prioritizing genuine, evidence-based, editorially rigorous storytelling. Buyers are not interested in promotional fluff or low-effort content.

The Path Forward

The imperative is clear: companies must build the public record that AI learns from. For emerging ventures, this isn't optional, it's the difference between being cited and being invisible.

The path forward demands discipline, not ad hoc content and traditional campaigns. Transform your assets into proof points that serve human readers, sales teams, and the AI engines shaping market perception.

Every company needs a public record. Build it deliberately or leave it to chance.

YesPress builds public knowledge that AI engines learn from. Customer stories. Curated narratives. Editorial rigor. An always-on presence that earns citations from algorithms and trust from buyers.

We don't wait for discovery. We engineer it.

Learn more at yespress.io

Key Statistics at a Glance

YesPress White Paper Data Points

Metric	Value	Source
U.S. consumers using AI tools at product discovery stage	35%	Similarweb
B2B deals go to the favored vendor before sales contact	80%	6sense
Overlap between top Google results and AI-cited sources fell	70% vs. <20% in Q1 2024	Brandlight
B2B decision makers influenced by case studies	73%	Content Marketing Institute
More qualified leads from third-party content vs owned channels	67% more	LinkedIn
Content marketing return vs paid advertising	$3 for every $1 vs $1.80	Content Marketing Institute
B2B buyers who choose a brand recognized on Day 1	81%	Bain and LinkedIn
Marketing content productivity increase from AI tools	20-30%	McKinsey
Existing B2B content that is underperforming	40-60%	Floodlight
B2B purchasing decisions made before first contact with sales	67%	Forrester
B2B buyers who believe brands do thought leadership well	25%	B2B International
Thought leadership rising as a critical buying factor	20th to 3rd globally	B2B International

Sources

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THANK YOU.

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