

AEO Audit — Client-Ready Playbook (v2)

This is how we audit — clear phases, pass criteria, deliverables, and KPIs.

Phase 0 — Scope, Baselines, Access (Day 0–1)

Inputs: domains, key markets, top 10 products/services, goals, competitors (5–10), CMS, CDN, GA/GSC/GBP access.

Baselines to record (screenshots + CSV):

- GSC: Performance (last 90d), Indexing → Pages, Links.
- CWV (CrUX): LCP/CLS/INP by origin, mobile & desktop.
- AI visibility (EaseFy Insights): current citations/mentions in SGE/Perplexity/ChatGPT/Bing/Claude.
- GBP: views/calls/directions (if local).

Governance & Privacy: confirm data retention window, anonymize PII in exports, define read-only roles.

Deliverable: 1-page Brief (goals, KPIs, constraints), Access Log.

Phase 1 — Technical Foundations (Crawlability → Speed → Structure)

1.1 Robots, Sitemaps, Canonicals (keep)

Pass criteria

- /robots.txt allows all needed sections; no accidental Disallow.
- XML sitemaps referenced in robots, valid, only indexables; <1% errors; include hreflang sitemaps when relevant.
- Canonical self/true master; no cross-domain mistakes; no mixed canonical/noindex conflicts.

How: fetch /robots.txt, /sitemap.xml (+ nested), spot-check <link rel='canonical'>, crawl export (Response Codes + Canonicals).

1.2 Indexation Health (keep)

Add: Indexation budget policy: non-commercial thin/filter pages set to noindex, follow; facet rules documented.

How: site: sampling, GSC “Not indexed” reasons, dedupe clusters, pagination policy (self-canonical on page 2+, unique titles, strong internal links).

1.3 Status Codes & Redirects (keep)

Change: Enforce single-hop 301 everywhere; replace stray 302s (unless truly temporary); use 410 for permanently removed URLs.

1.4 Core Web Vitals by Template (keep)

- Preload the LCP hero (+ proper sizes) on each key template.
- Ship critical CSS inline for above-the-fold Q&A blocks; defer non-critical CSS.
- Font display: swap and limit font files; subset and preconnect to font host.
- Reduce JS hydration on FAQ/HowTo pages (server-render HTML).
- Target thresholds (field): LCP ≤ 2.5s, CLS ≤ 0.1, INP ≤ 200ms.

1.5 Structured Data for AEO (keep, expand)

Required entity graph (JSON-LD):

- Organization (@id, sameAs, logo, brand, knowsAbout, areaServed)
- WebSite with SearchAction
- BreadcrumbList
- Service/Product (price/specs where relevant)
- FAQPage (Q&A)
- HowTo (when procedural)
- Article/BlogPosting (author → Person)
- LocalBusiness (if local)
- Speakable (only where eligible)

Add: Consistent @id graph across pages (e.g., <https://www.example.com/#org>). Link to Wikidata/LinkedIn/Crunchbase for disambiguation. Validate in Rich Results + EaseFy Insights Schema Tester.

1.6 Internationalization (if any) (keep)

Reciprocal hreflang, correct BCP-47 codes, x-default. Avoid parameter-based language switching. Include localized sitemaps.

1.7 Security & URL Hygiene (keep)

HTTPS only, no mixed content; unify trailing slash/case; collapse tracking params → canonical; block infinite calendar/facets; set cache/CDN headers.

Deliverables:

- Tech Fix List (CSV): Issue → URLs → Exact fix → Owner → ETA → Status.
- CWV Template Sheet by template (Home, PLP, PDP, Blog, etc.) with LCP element noted.

Phase 2 — On-Page (AEO-First, Entity/Q&A; Driven)

2.1 Intent + Entity Coverage (keep)

Add: Answer Graph per page:

- Primary Question (H1/lede answers in 1–2 sentences, 20–30 words speakable).
- Secondary Questions (3–8 PAA-style).
- Entities (people, orgs, products, places).
- Evidence (pricing, steps, pros/cons, comparisons, screenshots, case proof).

2.2 Headings & Copy (keep)

One H1; tight H2/H3 hierarchy; lede gives the direct answer (used by AI summaries). Add visible 'Last updated' date.

2.3 Q&A; Blocks for AEO (keep)

3–6 scannable Q&As on each key page. Mirror them in FAQPage JSON-LD. Keep primary answers 40–60 words.

2.4 Internal Linking (Answer Paths) (keep, make explicit)

- From every key page, 3–5 contextual links using entity-rich anchors.
- Pillar ↔ Cluster is bidirectional.
- Place at least one internal link above the fold.

2.5 Media & EEAT (keep)

Author bio, 'Reviewed by' when applicable, last updated; unique images with entity-mirroring alt; cite reputable sources; add org address and contact options.

2.6 Keyword Intelligence & Query Classes (add)

Purpose: make AEO measurable by mapping topics to real language users and AI use in answers.

Inputs: GSC queries & pages, People Also Ask, Site Search logs, competitor FAQ/HowTo, EaseFy Insights missed-opportunity queries.

Query classes to cover:

- Informational: what/why/how definitions, steps, troubleshooting.
- Transactional: pricing, plans, book/buy, comparison (brand vs brand, product vs product).
- Local & Service: 'near me', city/service, hours, contact.
- Navigational/Brand: brand + feature, brand + pricing, brand + support.
- Conversational/Voice: 20–30 word answers, natural phrasing.

Deliverables: Keyword → Intent → Entity → Page/Section → Schema → KPI (impressions, clicks, AI citations).

Guardrails: cluster by entity not just volume; prefer answerable specificity over vanity head terms.

Deliverables:

- Answer Brief per page (one-pager)
- FAQ Builder (questions + 1-sentence answers + JSON-LD block)
- Internal Link Map (source → anchor → target)

- Keyword-Intent Matrix (CSV) with query class & target URL

Phase 3 — Off-Page & Link Risk (keep, clarify)

3.1 Brand/Entity Signals (keep)

Align Organization sameAs with real profiles; aim for 1–2 neutral knowledge sources (e.g., Wikidata). Track PR mentions tied to entities; monitor Brand SERP panel changes.

3.2 Anchor Profile (keep)

Healthy mix: brand/URL/topical; exact-match for any single term $\leq 10\text{--}15\%$. Toxic Backlink Workflow: keep steps A–G with evidence links. Disavow only after 2–3 outreach attempts logged.

Deliverables: Link Risk Register (domain, page, risk score, reason, action, outreach log); Disavow Log (dated, exact lines submitted).

Phase 4 — Local SEO (when applicable) (keep)

- GBP: categories, services, Q&A, photos, posts; UTM on GBP site links; call tracking numbers configured with NAP consistency.
- NAP Consistency: top aggregators + priority verticals.
- Local Landing Pages: one page per city/service; reviews, map, FAQ, LocalBusiness schema; unique local proof.
- Reviews: ongoing acquisition; owner replies.

Deliverables: GBP Checklist (on/off items + screenshots); Citations Sheet (source, status, corrected fields).

Phase 5 — Mobile-First UX (keep)

- Parity of content desktop vs mobile.
- UX: 16px+ base, $\geq 48\text{px}$ tap targets, no intrusive interstitials, stable sticky headers.
- Mobile CWV: preload hero, lazy-load below the fold, defer non-critical JS, minimize hydration; test CLS from banners/consent.

Deliverables: Mobile UX Punchlist (with screenshots at 360px width).

Measurement & Governance (make explicit)

KPIs

- Technical: Indexed pages, % 200 OK, redirect chains count, template CWV (field).
- AEO: EaseFy Insights — AI citations/mentions across engines; SGE inclusion rate; % pages with FAQ/HowTo/Service schema valid.
- SEO: Clicks, impressions, top queries/landing pages, average position by entity/topic.
- Off-Page: RD count, anchor mix, toxic RD count, removals, disavowed.
- Local: GBP actions (calls, directions), local rankings, review velocity.

Cadence

- Exec 1-pager weekly for first 4 weeks (top 5 issues: Impact × Effort), then bi-weekly.
- Issue Board with statuses (Open → In progress → Ready for QA → Done).
- AEO Visibility Trend embedded (sparkline per engine).
- Experiment Log (what changed, when, expected impact).

Scoring Rubrics (simple & visible)

Per area (Technical, On-Page, Off-Page, Local, Mobile): Readiness (0–3) — 0 missing/broken; 1 partial; 2 mostly compliant; 3 best-practice.

Impact (H/M/L) and Effort (H/M/L) feed a 2×2 Impact/Effort Matrix.

Overall AEO Readiness Score (0–100): = 0.30*Technical + 0.30*OnPage + 0.15*OffPage + 0.10*Local + 0.15*Mobile.

“Show it” — Ready Templates (copy/paste)

Issue Ticket (Engineering-ready)

Issue: Preload LCP hero on PDP
URLs (examples): /product/sku-123, /product/sku-456
Exact Fix:
<link rel="preload" as="image" href="...hero.jpg"
 imagesrcset="..."
 imagesizes="(min-width:...)"
 fetchpriority="high">
Owner: Frontend
Impact: High Effort: Medium
Status: Open ETA: 3 days
Evidence: PSI screenshots + CrUX LCP element

Source URL	Anchor Text (entity-rich)	Target URL	Placement
/services/seo	AEO audit checklist	/blog/aeo-audit	Intro paragraph
/pricing	schema markup validator	/tools/schema-tester	FAQ #2

FAQ HTML + JSON-LD (minimal)

```
<section aria-labelledby="faq">
  <h2 id="faq">FAQs</h2>
  <details><summary>What is AEO?</summary>
    <p>Answer Engine Optimization structures content and entities so AI systems can cite you.</p>
  </details>
  <details><summary>How long to see results?</summary>
    <p>Expect 2-8 weeks for indexing/CwV gains; AI citations can appear sooner on strong entities.</p>
  </details>
```

```
</section>
<script type="application/ld+json">
{"@context":"https://schema.org","@type":"FAQPage","mainEntity":[
  {"@type":"Question","name":"What is AEO?","acceptedAnswer":{"@type":"Answer","text":"Answer Engine Optimizati
  {"@type":"Question","name":"How long to see results?","acceptedAnswer":{"@type":"Answer","text":"Expect
  ]}
}</script>
```

Disavow Log (snippet)

2025-09-22 – domain:badpbn.net – outreach x3 (no reply) – disavowed
2025-09-22 – https://spam.tld/page-89.html – removed by webmaster – no disavow