SMALL BUSINESS EXPO · PHOENIX

How AI Search Is Changing the Way Customers Find Your Business.

What ChatGPT, Gemini and Google's AI Overviews actually check before they recommend a business — and five things you can check on your own site today.

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Live Session · 45 Minutes

Booth 419

BEFORE WE START

This is a content session, not a sales pitch.

No selling

No product demo, no pricing. The next 45 minutes are about your website, not ours.

Something you can use

You'll leave with five checks you can run on your own site this afternoon.

Ask in the chat

Drop questions anytime. I'll keep an eye on it and save time at the end.

— THE SHIFT

People stopped scrolling a list. They ask, and get one answer.

THE OLD WAY · 10 BLUE LINKS

G plumber near me phoenix az

Sponsored ads.example.com
24/7 Emergency Plumbing — Call Now

yelp.com › phoenix
Top 10 Best Plumbers in Phoenix, AZ
Compare ratings, reviews and prices…

acmeplumbing.com
Acme Plumbing | Phoenix Plumbers
Family owned and operated since day one…

desertflow.com
Desert Flow Plumbing & Drain
Serving the Valley with honest pricing…

THE NEW WAY · ONE ANSWER

Who's a good plumber near me? My water heater just quit.

Here are two Phoenix plumbers that handle same-day water heater replacement:

1. **Desert Flow Plumbing** — open now, same-day installs if the unit is in stock, 4.8 stars.
2. **Valley Pro Plumbing** — 24/7 line, standard install takes 2–3 hours.

— THE SHIFT, CONTINUED

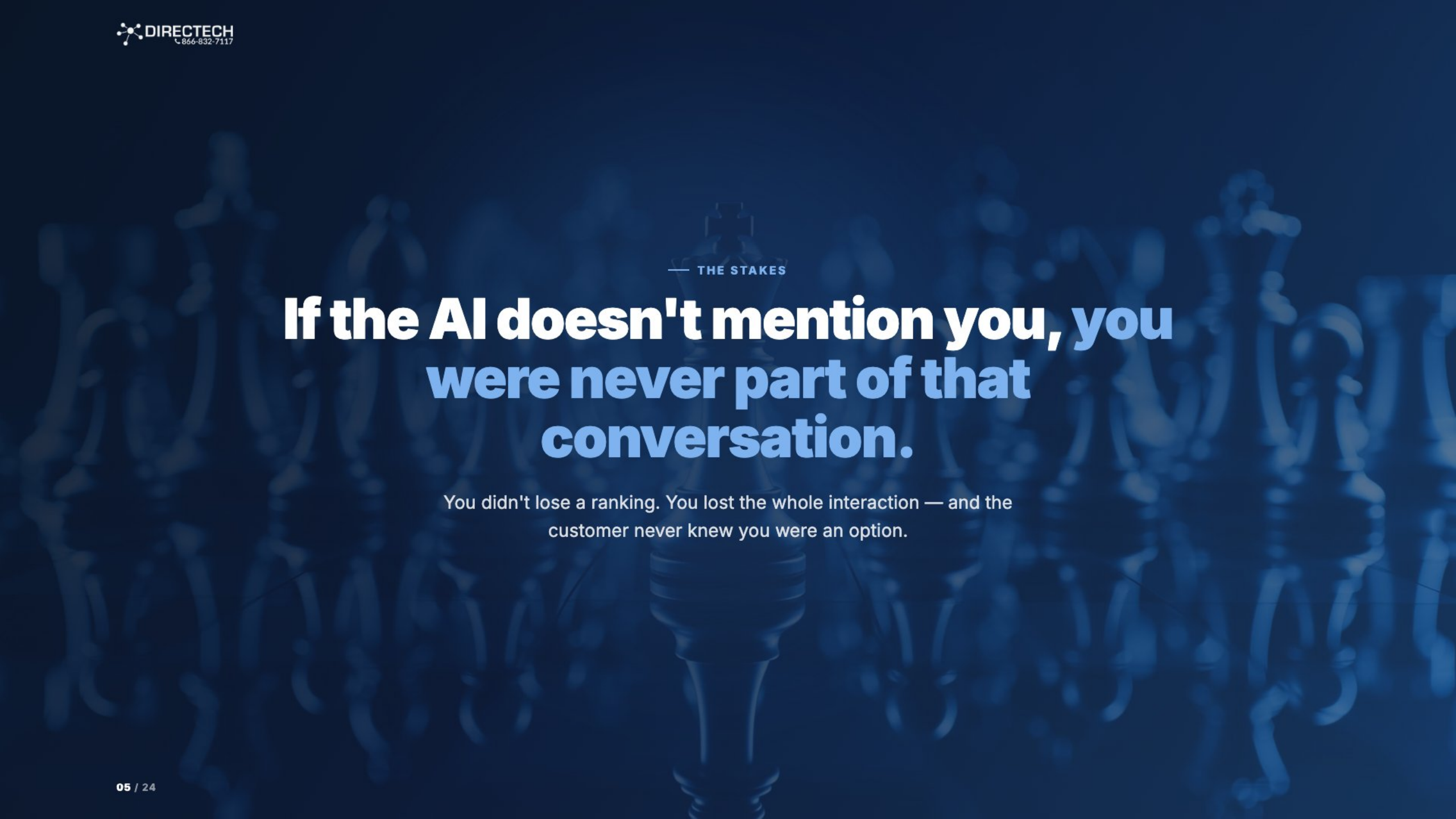
There is no page two anymore.

As link number six, you still had a shot — someone might scroll. In an AI answer, the comparing already happened before the customer saw anything.

10
options on a classic results page

1–3
businesses named in a typical AI answer

0
chances if you're not one of them



— THE STAKES

If the AI doesn't mention you, you were never part of that conversation.

You didn't lose a ranking. You lost the whole interaction — and the customer never knew you were an option.

— TWO DIFFERENT DOORS

Chatbots and AI Overviews read the same signals.

01

Chatbots

ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, Copilot. Someone opens the app on purpose and asks a question.

02

Google AI Overviews

Built into regular Google search, above the blue links. Shows up automatically — the bigger door for most local businesses.

BEHIND THE RECOMMENDATION

Three things these tools actually check.

01

Structured data

A machine-readable label that states plainly what kind of business you are.

02

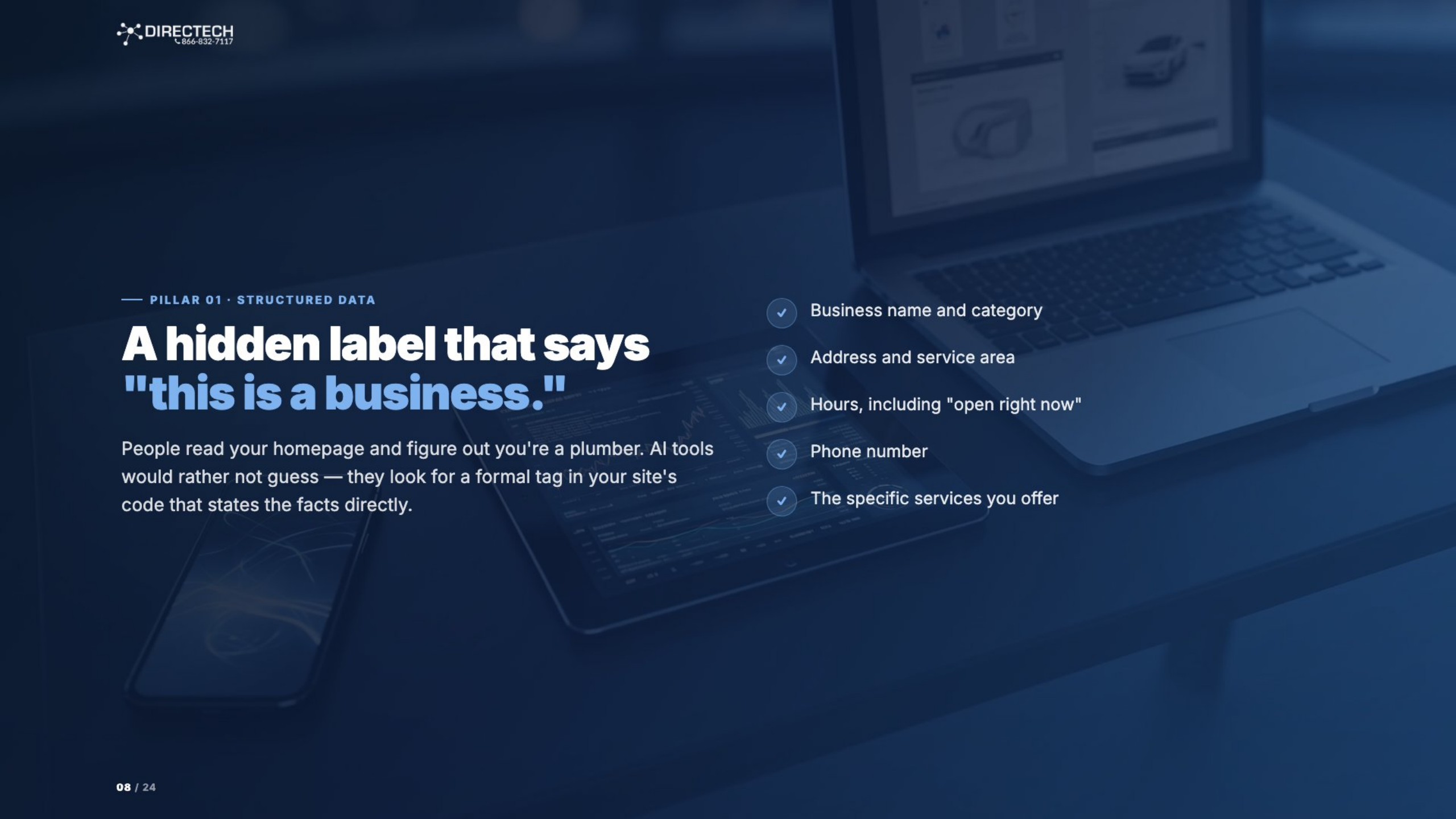
Consistent facts

Name, address and phone that match, word for word, everywhere you're listed.

03

Real answers

Content that answers a customer's question instead of just announcing you exist.



PILLAR 01 · STRUCTURED DATA

A hidden label that says "this is a business."

People read your homepage and figure out you're a plumber. AI tools would rather not guess — they look for a formal tag in your site's code that states the facts directly.

- Business name and category
- Address and service area
- Hours, including "open right now"
- Phone number
- The specific services you offer

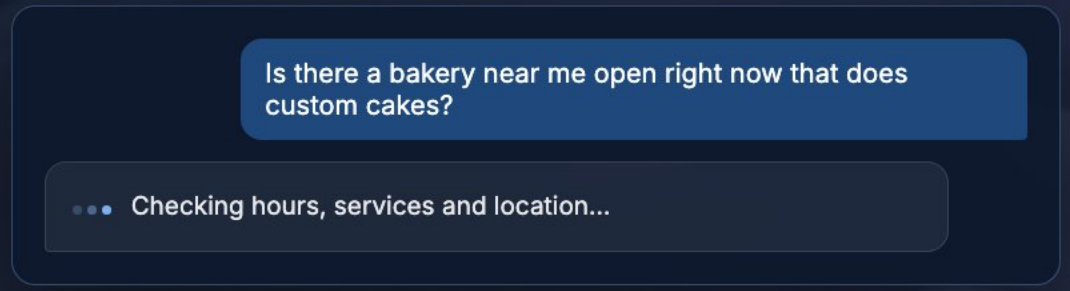
PILLAR 01 · WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Invisible to visitors. Instant for machines.

It's called schema markup. Most small business sites built on older templates never had it added — and nobody notices, because you can't see it.

acmeplumbing.com — page source

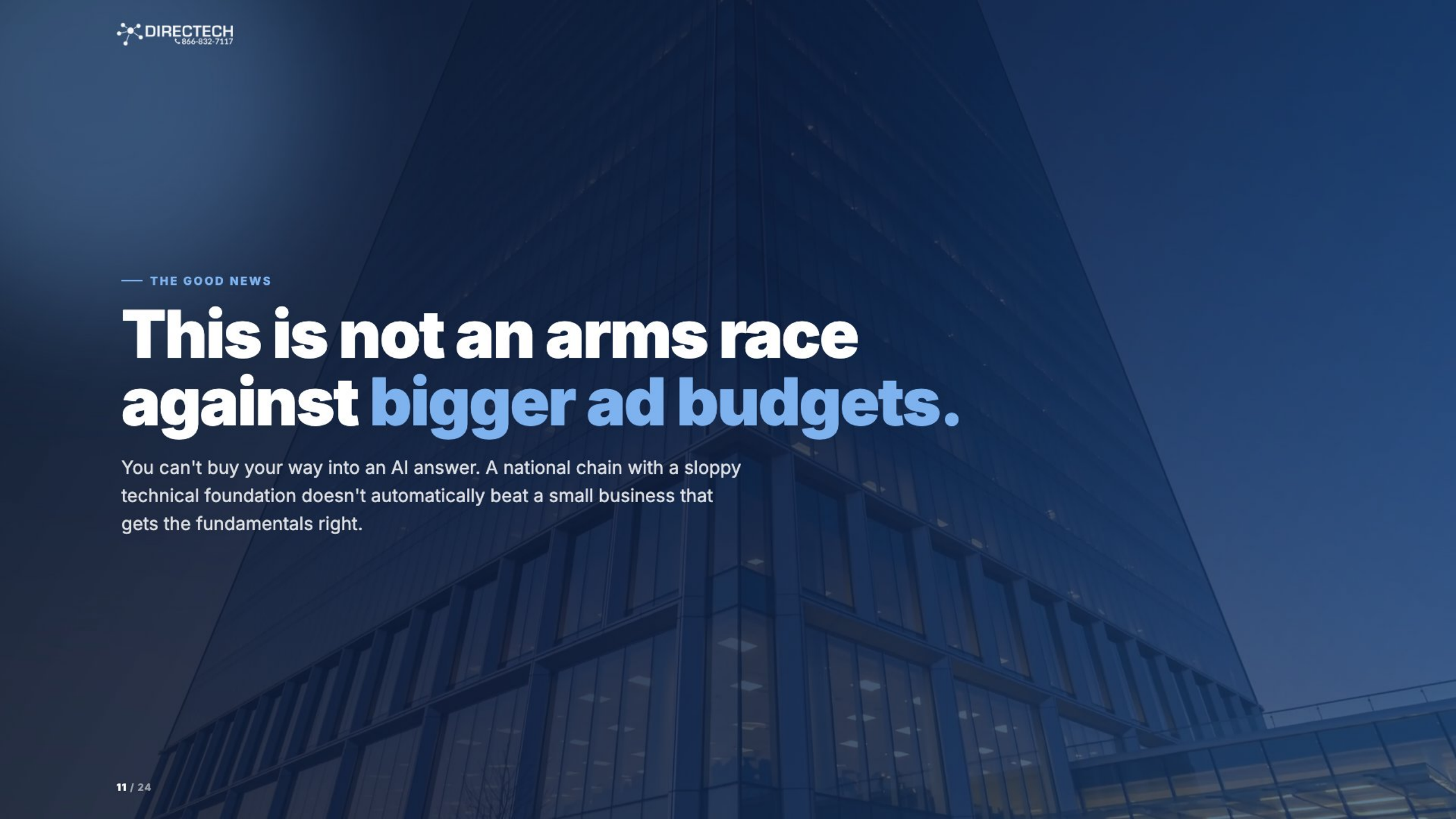
```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@type": "Plumber",
  "name": "Acme Plumbing",
  "telephone": "(602) 555-0100",
  "address": "1400 E Camelback Rd, Phoenix",
  "openingHours": "Mo-Fr 07:00-18:00",
  "areaServed": "Phoenix Metro"
}
</script>
```



PILLAR 01 · A SECOND EXAMPLE

To say yes, the AI needs four facts it can trust.

1. Business type: bakery
2. Service: custom cakes
3. Hours — is it open right now?
4. Location relative to the customer



THE GOOD NEWS

This is not an arms race against bigger ad budgets.

You can't buy your way into an AI answer. A national chain with a sloppy technical foundation doesn't automatically beat a small business that gets the fundamentals right.

PILLAR 02 · CONSISTENT FACTS

Before it recommends you, the AI runs a background check.

Two numbers, and no way to know which is current. It doesn't guess on your behalf — it moves on to a business whose facts line up.



— PILLAR 02 · THE ONE EVERYONE MISSES

Four names. One business.

Obvious to a person. To a matching system, that's four strings of text that don't agree. Pick one exact version and use it everywhere — down to the punctuation.

LEGAL NAME	Smith Family Dentistry, LLC
WEBSITE	Smith Family Dentistry
GOOGLE	Smith Family Dentistry PC
YELP	Smith Dental

PILLAR 02 · MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Every location is its own trust check.

A mismatch at one address doesn't just hurt that location — it can make the AI less confident about the whole business. Audit location by location, not just the flagship.

PILLAR 03 · REAL ANSWERS, NOT ADS

AI tools quote answers. They skip billboards.

READS LIKE AN AD

"Family owned and operated since day one! Call now for the best service in town!"

ANSWERS A QUESTION

"A standard water heater replacement takes 2–3 hours. Most jobs are same-day if the unit is in stock."

PILLAR 03 · A SECOND EXAMPLE

Same honest message. Now it's answer-shaped.

PERSONAL INJURY FIRM · BEFORE

"Aggressive representation. We fight for you. Call for a free consultation."

AFTER

"Most personal injury cases settle before trial. The first consultation takes about thirty minutes, at no cost."

A SIMPLE TEST FOR EVERY SENTENCE

Could a stranger read this one sentence and walk away knowing something true and useful?

Yes: it's answer-shaped. If it only makes sense as something a business says about itself, it's ad-shaped.

— COMMON MISTAKES

Five mistakes I see constantly.

Drop in the chat which one sounds most like your business.

- Thinking this means redesigning the whole website
- Fixing the phone number in one place and assuming it's fixed everywhere
- Writing "Why choose us" instead of real customer questions
- Security settings that accidentally block AI crawlers
- Assuming a modern-looking site is automatically machine-readable

— TRY THIS TODAY · CHECKS 1–3

Run these on your own site this afternoon.

1

Ask an AI who you are

Open a new chat and type "who is [your business]." Does it get your hours and phone right?

2

Compare your listings

Your site, Google Business Profile and Yelp — check the phone number character by character.

3

Read your homepage out loud

After every sentence: did that answer a question, or just say we're great?

— TRY THIS TODAY · CHECKS 4–5

Two quick technical checks anyone can do.

4

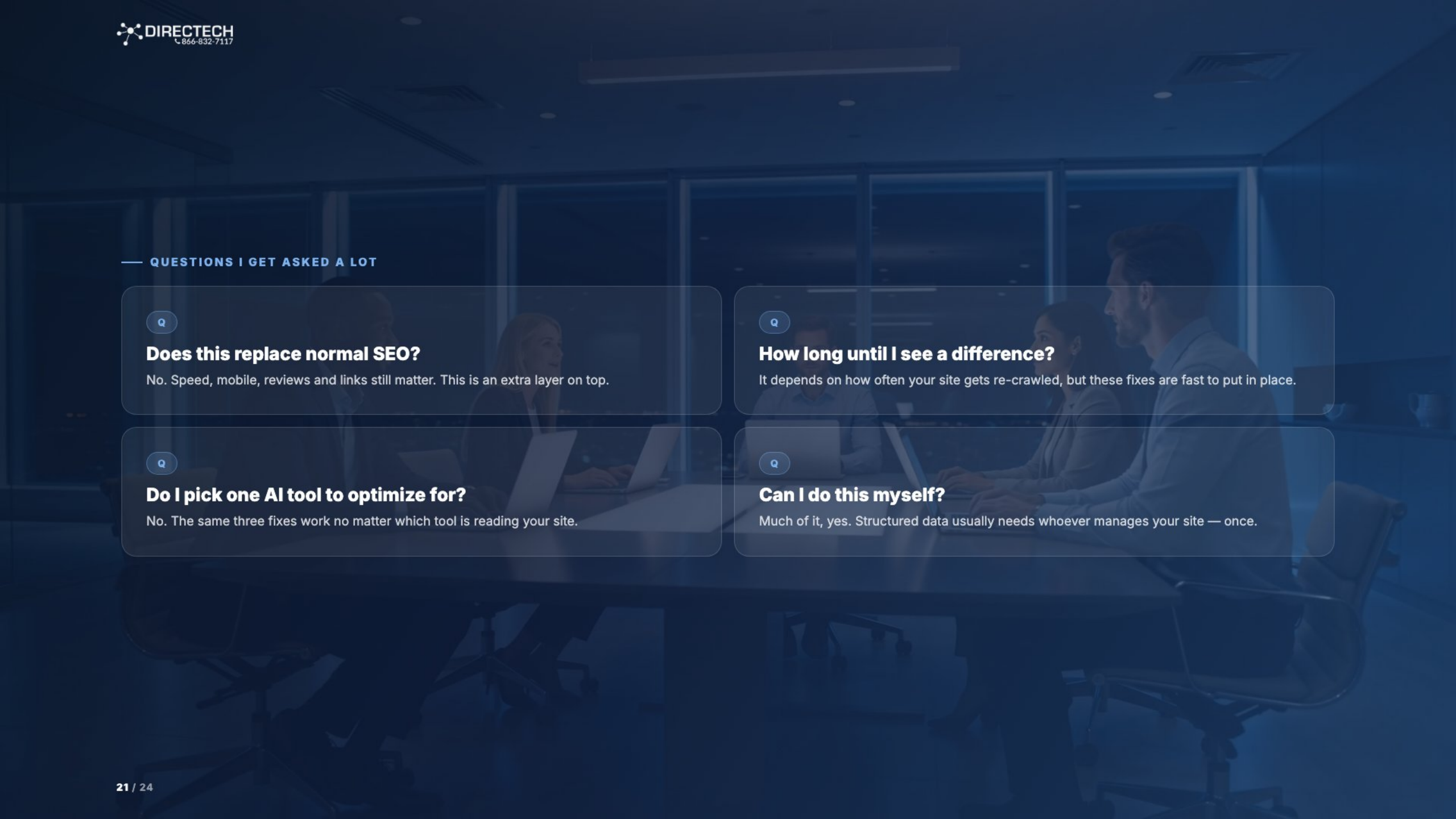
Search your source for "schema"

Right-click your homepage → View Page Source → find "schema." Nothing there means no structured data.

5

Ask about bot blocking

Ask whoever manages your hosting whether any firewall or "block AI scrapers" setting is turned on.



QUESTIONS I GET ASKED A LOT

Q

Does this replace normal SEO?

No. Speed, mobile, reviews and links still matter. This is an extra layer on top.

Q

How long until I see a difference?

It depends on how often your site gets re-crawled, but these fixes are fast to put in place.

Q

Do I pick one AI tool to optimize for?

No. The same three fixes work no matter which tool is reading your site.

Q

Can I do this myself?

Much of it, yes. Structured data usually needs whoever manages your site — once.

QUESTIONS I GET ASKED A LOT

Q

Will this stop working when the AI changes?

The tools will change. Giving machines clear, accurate facts has mattered for over a decade — and matters more with each generation.

Q

Do reviews still matter?

Enormously. Recent, genuine reviews are still one of the strongest trust signals for AI tools and people alike.

— THE OUTCOME

Stop hoping to be found. Start being the one suggested.

01

Structured data that states what you are

02

One consistent set of facts, everywhere

03

Real answers instead of ads

DIRECTECH
YOUR OFFICE IN THE CLOUD

Thank you. See you at Booth 419.

Questions are always welcome — come see us at the Small Business Expo in Phoenix on November 18 to talk through what this looks like for your own site.

CALL	VISIT	NOV 18 · PHOENIX
866-832-7117	directech.net	Booth 419