Who AI Recommends: Footwear

How ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews rank 46 shoe brands across ten buying questions, and what it takes to be the brand they name first.

PUBLISHED BY
Answer Engine Daily
answerenginedaily.com

ANALYSIS POWERED BY
markaeo
markaeo.com

ENGINES
ChatGPT · Gemini · Google AI Overviews
United States · October 2026

PLEASE READ FIRST

Important notice and disclaimer

Please read the terms on the last page before using, sharing or quoting this report.

AT A GLANCE

The footwear category in numbers

30
AI answers analyzed
10 buying questions × 3 engines

46
shoe brands named
by at least one engine

5 of 10
questions where all three engines agree
on the #1 brand

6%
of citations point to brands' own websites
9 of 145 sources

63%
of answers mention New Balance
the most of any brand

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is part of the Answer Engine Daily AEO Index. Every month we ask ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews the same buying questions and record which brands they recommend, the order they put them in, and the sources they cite. This edition covers footwear, with ten questions running from basketball shoes to sandals.

None of the questions names a brand, so every brand starts on equal terms.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AI has already picked its favorite shoe brands, and the shortlist will surprise most marketers

In footwear, a handful of brands and a handful of review sites decide what AI recommends. Nike leads without dominating. New Balance turns up in more answers than any rival and is never ranked first. Almost everything the engines cite (94%) comes from someone other than the brand.

KEY FINDINGS

1 **Nike leads, by less than you might think.**

Nike tops the index with an AI Rank Score of 43.7 and is named first in 9 of 30 answers. Hoka (36.3), Adidas (31.7), New Balance (30.7) and Brooks (29.3) all sit within 15 points. Nike wins basketball and gym outright and shares lifestyle sneakers with Adidas. Yet no engine recommends it for trail running.

2 **New Balance is everywhere and never first.**

New Balance shows up in 63% of answers, more than any rival, and in 80% of ChatGPT's. Not once is it ranked first. Adidas has a milder version of the same problem: 53% of answers, one first place. Shoppers act on the first name an AI gives them, so a mention further down the list is worth much less.

3 **Specialists win their questions outright.**

Seven brands split the ten #1 spots. Brooks takes running and walking. Hoka takes trail and all-day standing. Asics wins tennis, Allen Edmonds wins dress shoes and Birkenstock wins sandals. Every one of those wins scores between 87 and 100.

4 **The engines rarely agree.**

ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews pick the same top brand for only 5 of the 10 questions. Leading on ChatGPT tells you little about where you sit on Google AI Overviews, so each engine needs its own tracking.

5 **AI learns about shoes from other people's websites.**

Of the 145 sources the engines cited, 94% belong to someone other than the brand: review labs, publishers, video channels and forums. RunRepeat, YouTube, Reddit, T3 and Tom's Guide top the list. Google AI Overviews relies heavily on Google Shopping cards (29% of its citations). Brand websites account for just 6%.

6 **Some big names are missing.**

Clarks and Allbirds don't appear in any answer to the questions they compete on. Merrell (trail), Red Wing (work) and Ecco (dress) are also absent where shoppers would expect to see them.

1 · THE FOOTWEAR LEADERBOARD

Nike leads the AI shelf for footwear, with four rivals within 15 points

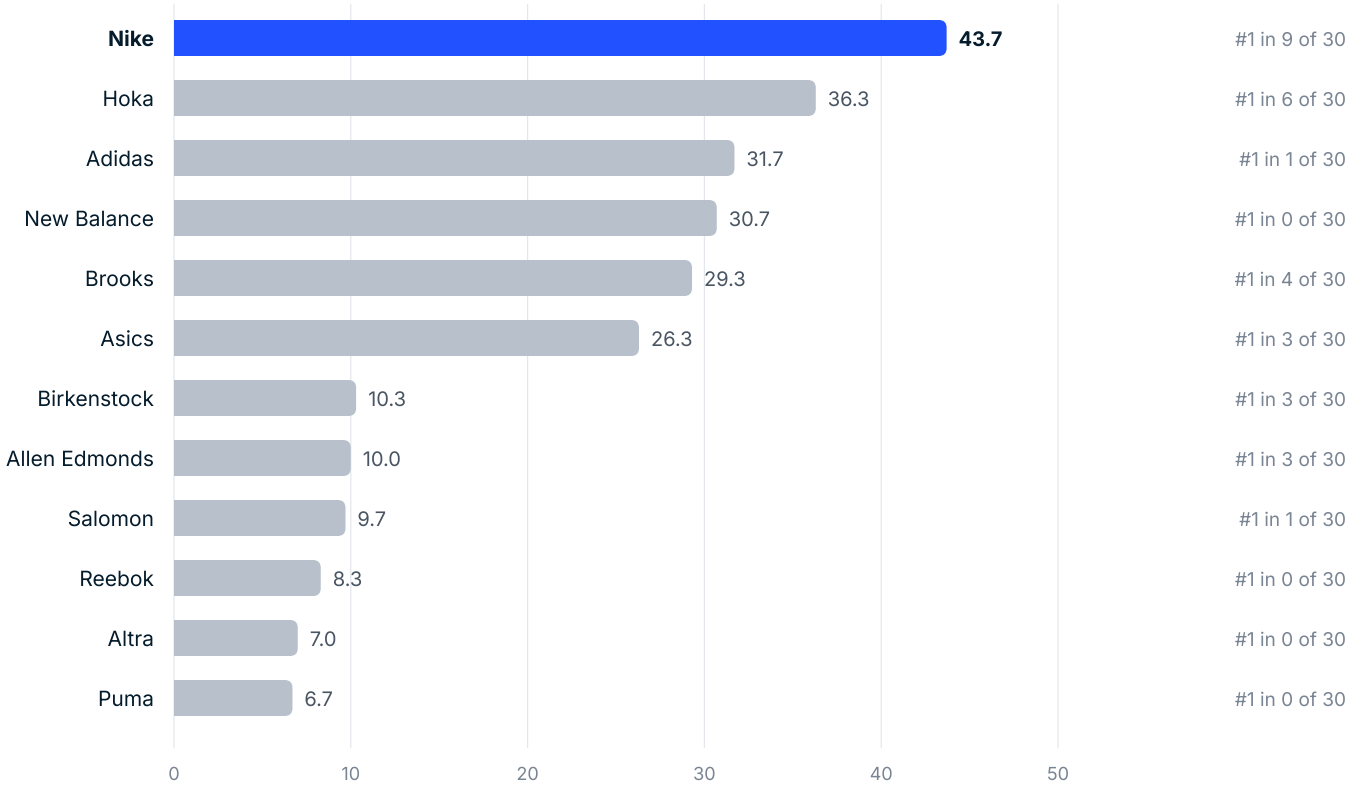
The AI Rank Score measures how high each engine places a brand in its recommendations across all ten questions. To score 100, a brand would need to be named first by all three engines on every question. Footwear questions cover very different needs, from basketball to dress shoes, so nobody gets close. No single brand owns this category.

Nike's lead comes from two outright wins (basketball, and gym and training), a shared win on lifestyle sneakers, and solid positions on tennis and running. Hoka gets its score from two outright wins and the second highest top pick rate. After the top six, scores drop off fast. Specialists like Birkenstock and Allen Edmonds win their one question and barely register anywhere else.

Exhibit 1

Nike ranks first on the AI Rank Score, with Hoka second.

AI Rank Score, footwear category, top 12 brands (0–100)



Figures on the right show how many of the 30 answers rank the brand #1.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

Being mentioned and being chosen are two different things

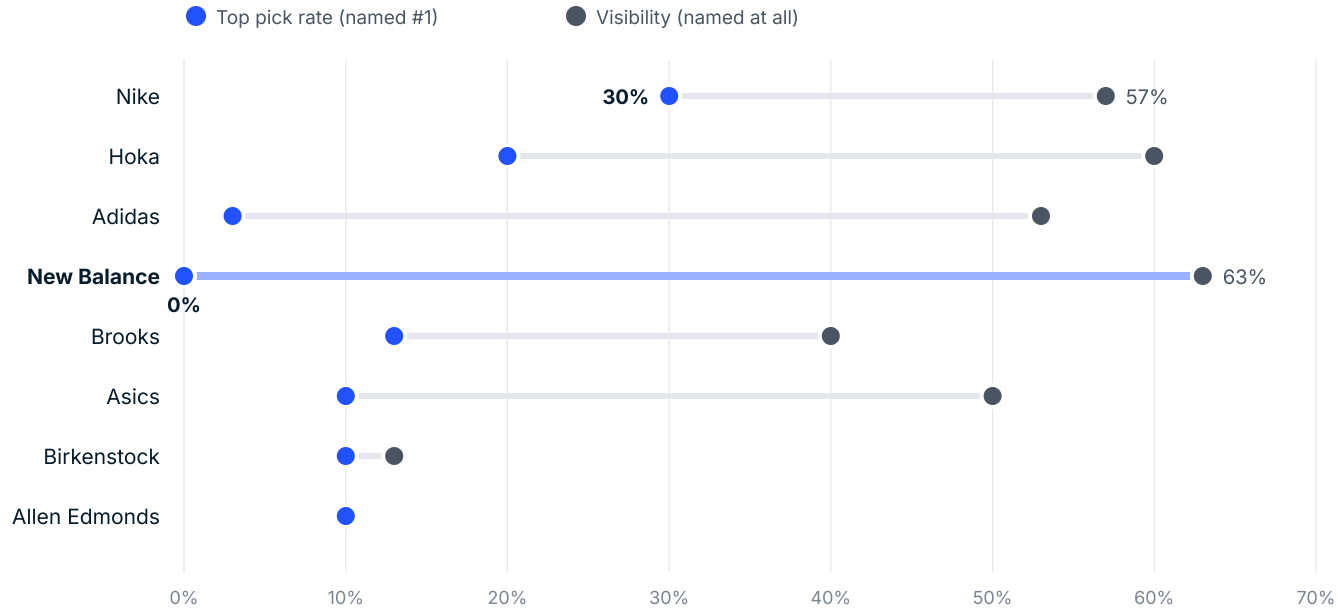
Visibility counts how often a brand is named at all. The top pick rate counts how often it is named first. The gap between the two tells you whether an engine sees a brand as the answer or as one more option on the list.

New Balance has the widest gap in the index. It is named in 63% of answers and is the first pick in none of them. Adidas follows the same pattern on a smaller scale. Nike, Hoka and Brooks convert visibility into first picks far more often. If a CMO watches one number here, it should be the top pick rate.

Exhibit 2

New Balance is named more often than any rival, but never first.

Visibility and top pick rate, % of 30 AI answers, top 8 brands



Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

Why first place matters

AI answers are short lists. Someone who asks for "the best running shoe brands" tends to read the first name or two and stop there. Brands in fourth or fifth place still get seen, but they rarely get bought.

2 · WINNERS AND LOSERS, QUESTION BY QUESTION

Seven brands share the ten #1 spots in footwear

Look at the questions one at a time and footwear turns into a market of specialists. Winning one use case says little about the next one. That leaves room for focused brands. Brooks wins "running" and "walking" while appearing in only 40% of all footwear answers.

Exhibit 3

Specialists own their questions, and no brand wins more than three.

AI Rank Score by question (0–100), top 8 brands; bold = question winner; – = not named by any engine

	Basket-ball	Tennis	Running	Walking	Trail	Gym & training	Life-style	All-day standing	Dress (men)	Sandals & slides
Nike	**100**	80	57	–	–	**100**	**87**	–	–	13
Hoka	–	–	43	80	**93**	7	7	**100**	–	33
Adidas	80	67	3	–	–	53	**87**	–	–	27
New Balance	43	47	30	67	3	10	67	40	–	–
Brooks	–	–	**93**	**93**	40	–	–	67	–	–
Asics	–	**87**	80	33	–	7	27	30	–	–
Birkenstock	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	**100**
Allen Edmonds	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	**100**	–

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

What this means for brands

Pick the uses where your product really is the best option and build coverage around them. A focused brand can own a question in this category: Brooks wins running and walking with far less overall visibility than Nike. Broad brands should check every question for gaps. Nike is absent from trail running, which it would expect to compete on.

Exhibit 4

Winners and losers on every footwear question.

Winner and runner-up by AI Rank Score

#	QUESTION	WINNER (SCORE)	RUNNER-UP	DETAIL
1	Best basketball shoe brands	**Nike 100**	Adidas 80	p. 9
2	Best tennis shoe brands	**Asics 87**	Nike 80	p. 10
3	Best running shoe brands	**Brooks 93**	Asics 80	p. 11
4	Best walking shoe brands	**Brooks 93**	Hoka 80	p. 12
5	Best trail running shoe brands	**Hoka 93**	Salomon 80	p. 13
6	Best gym and training shoe brands	**Nike 100**	Reebok 80	p. 14
7	Best lifestyle sneaker brands	**Nike & Adidas 87**	New Balance 67	p. 15
8	Best shoe brands for standing all day at work	**Hoka 100**	Brooks 67	p. 16
9	Best dress shoe brands for men	**Allen Edmonds 100**	Alden 47	p. 17
10	Best sandal and slide brands	**Birkenstock 100**	Teva 57	p. 18

Each question has its own page with the full list of brands, engine positions and sources (see the Detail column).

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

QUOTE IT

#1 in AI answers for "Best running shoe brands": Brooks (AI Rank Score 93/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

Results apply to October 2026 only and are subject to the Important notice and disclaimer on the last page.

2 · QUESTION 1 OF 10

"Best basketball shoe brands"

Nike is the clear AI pick for basketball shoes

8	100	All 3	8
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Nike	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Nike scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Adidas is a distant second at 80. The field is narrow. Only 8 brands are named, and the top three take 62% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.1

Nike scores 100, out of 8 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 8 brands for "Best basketball shoe brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Nike	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	34.6%	3/3	3/3
2	**Adidas**	**80**	#2	#2	#2	13.6%	2/3	0/3
3	**New Balance**	**43**	#5	#3	#4	13.6%	2/3	0/3
4	**Puma**	**43**	#4	#5	#3	13.6%	2/3	0/3
5	**Under Armour**	**33**	#3	#4	–	6.2%	1/3	0/3
6	**Li-Ning**	**13**	–	#6	#5	4.9%	2/3	0/3
7	**Anta**	**10**	#7	#7	#6	11.1%	2/3	0/3
8	**Reebok**	**3**	#6	–	–	2.5%	0/3	0/3

Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

Google Shopping cards	3
weartesters.com	2
reddit.com	1
runrepeat.com	1

Plus 1 more site.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE None of the expected brands.

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best basketball shoe brands": Nike (AI Rank Score 100/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 2 OF 10

"Best tennis shoe brands"

Asics leads AI answers for tennis shoes, ahead of Nike

11	87	2 of 3	13
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Asics	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 1 from brand sites

Asics scores 87. Two of the three engines rank it first. ChatGPT puts it at #3 and picks Nike instead. Nike is close behind at 80, so this question could change hands next month. In total 11 brands are named, and the top three take 42% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.2

Asics scores 87, out of 11 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best tennis shoe brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Asics	87	#3	**#1**	**#1**	16.4%	3/3	2/3
2	Nike	80	**#1**	#2	#3	15.1%	3/3	1/3
3	Adidas	67	#2	#4	#2	11.0%	3/3	0/3
4	New Balance	47	#4	#3	#4	13.7%	3/3	0/3
5	K-Swiss	20	#5	#5	–	11.0%	2/3	0/3
6	Babolat	17	#7	#6	#5	11.0%	3/3	0/3
7	Wilson	7	#6	#7	–	8.2%	2/3	0/3
8	Yonex	7	#8	#8	–	5.5%	2/3	0/3
9	Diadora	3	#10	–	–	2.7%	1/3	0/3
10	On	3	–	#9	–	2.7%	1/3	0/3

1 more brand named with lower scores. Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

Google Shopping cards	2
runrepeat.com	2
youtube.com	2
asics.com	1

Plus 6 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE None of the expected brands.

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best tennis shoe brands": Asics (AI Rank Score 87/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 3 OF 10

"Best running shoe brands"

Brooks leads AI answers for running shoes, ahead of Asics

11	93	2 of 3	11
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Brooks	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Brooks scores 93. Two of the three engines rank it first. Google AI Overviews puts it at #2 and picks Asics instead. Asics follows at 80. In total 11 brands are named, and the top three take 40% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.3

Brooks scores 93, out of 11 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best running shoe brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Brooks	93	**#1**	**#1**	#2	14.0%	3/3	2/3
2	Asics	80	#2	#3	**#1**	12.3%	3/3	1/3
3	Nike	57	#3	#2	#5	14.0%	3/3	0/3
4	Hoka	43	#5	#4	#3	12.3%	3/3	0/3
5	New Balance	30	#4	#6	#4	10.5%	3/3	0/3
6	Saucony	17	#6	#5	#7	10.5%	3/3	0/3
7	Altra	7	#7	#7	–	12.3%	2/3	0/3
8	Puma	7	#8	#8	–	7.0%	2/3	0/3
9	Adidas	3	–	–	#6	3.5%	1/3	0/3
10	On	3	–	#9	–	1.8%	1/3	0/3

1 more brand named with lower scores. Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

fleetfeet.com	1
Google Shopping cards	1
livescience.com	1
paceandpavement.com	1

Plus 7 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Adidas and On

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best running shoe brands": Brooks (AI Rank Score 93/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 4 OF 10

"Best walking shoe brands"

Brooks leads AI answers for walking shoes, ahead of Hoka

9	93	2 of 3	11
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Brooks	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 1 from brand sites

Brooks scores 93. Two of the three engines rank it first. Google AI Overviews puts it at #2 and picks Hoka instead. Hoka follows at 80. In total 9 brands are named, and the top three take 44% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.4

Brooks scores 93, out of 9 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 9 brands for "Best walking shoe brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Brooks	93	**#1**	**#1**	#2	15.3%	3/3	2/3
2	Hoka	80	#3	#2	**#1**	14.1%	3/3	1/3
3	New Balance	67	#2	#3	#3	14.1%	3/3	0/3
4	Asics	33	#5	#5	#4	15.3%	3/3	0/3
5	Skechers	17	#4	#7	–	12.9%	2/3	0/3
6	On	13	–	#6	#5	8.2%	2/3	0/3
7	Vionic	13	–	#4	–	7.1%	1/3	0/3
8	Altra	3	–	#8	–	8.2%	1/3	0/3
9	Orthofeet	3	–	#9	–	4.7%	1/3	0/3

Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

Google Shopping cards	2
bestfitnesswear.com	1
cntraveler.com	1
fitandwell.com	1

Plus 6 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Vionic

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best walking shoe brands": Brooks (AI Rank Score 93/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 5 OF 10

"Best trail running shoe brands"

Hoka leads AI answers for trail running shoes, ahead of Salomon

8	93	2 of 3	14
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Hoka	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Hoka scores 93. Two of the three engines rank it first. ChatGPT puts it at #2 and picks Salomon instead. Salomon follows at 80. In total 8 brands are named, and the top three take 47% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.5

Hoka scores 93, out of 8 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 8 brands for "Best trail running shoe brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Hoka	93	#2	**#1**	**#1**	13.2%	3/3	2/3
2	Salomon	80	**#1**	#3	#2	15.1%	3/3	1/3
3	Altra	57	#5	#2	#3	18.9%	3/3	0/3
4	Brooks	40	#3	#5	#5	15.1%	3/3	0/3
5	Saucony	40	#4	#4	#4	15.1%	3/3	0/3
6	La Sportiva	10	#7	#6	#6	15.1%	3/3	0/3
7	Mizuno	3	#8	–	–	3.8%	1/3	0/3
8	New Balance	3	#6	–	–	3.8%	1/3	0/3

Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

outdoorgearlab.com	1	1
rei.com	1	1
t3.com	2	
adventurealan.com		1

Plus 7 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE None of the expected brands.

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best trail running shoe brands": Hoka (AI Rank Score 93/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 6 OF 10

"Best gym and training shoe brands"

Nike is the clear AI pick for gym and training shoes

14	100	All 3	26
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Nike	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 2 from brand sites

Nike scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Reebok is a distant second at 80. In total 14 brands are named, and the top three take 46% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.6

Nike scores 100, out of 14 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best gym and training shoe brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Nike	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	21.6%	3/3	3/3
2	Reebok	80	#2	#2	#2	14.9%	3/3	0/3
3	Adidas	53	#3	#4	#3	9.5%	3/3	0/3
4	NOBULL	33	#9	#3	#5	12.2%	3/3	0/3
5	Under Armour	30	#4	#7	#4	9.5%	3/3	0/3
6	Converse	10	–	#5	–	4.1%	1/3	0/3
7	New Balance	10	#5	–	–	2.7%	1/3	0/3
8	Asics	7	#7	–	#7	4.1%	1/3	0/3
9	Hoka	7	#8	–	#6	4.1%	1/3	0/3
10	Altra	3	–	#9	–	2.7%	1/3	0/3

4 more brands named with lower scores. Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

youtube.com		4
fitandwell.com	1	1
tomsguide.com	2	
thatfitfriend.com		2

Plus 13 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE New Balance and Puma

> **QUOTE IT.** #1 in AI answers for "Best gym and training shoe brands": Nike (AI Rank Score 100/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 7 OF 10

"Best lifestyle sneaker brands"

Nike and Adidas share the top spot for lifestyle sneakers

12	87	2 of 3	17
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Nike and Adidas	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Nike and Adidas tie at 87. Nike is ranked first by two engines; Adidas is ranked first by one engine. ChatGPT and Gemini put Nike first, while Google AI Overviews goes with Adidas. In total 12 brands are named, and the top three take 46% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.7

Nike and Adidas score 87, out of 12 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best lifestyle sneaker brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Nike	87	**#1**	**#1**	#3	19.6%	3/3	2/3
2	Adidas	87	#2	#2	**#1**	13.0%	3/3	1/3
3	New Balance	67	#3	#3	#2	13.0%	3/3	0/3
4	Asics	27	–	#4	#4	6.5%	2/3	0/3
5	Veja	17	#7	#6	#5	10.9%	3/3	0/3
6	On	13	#5	#7	–	6.5%	2/3	0/3
7	Salomon	13	#8	#5	–	6.5%	2/3	0/3
8	Puma	13	#4	–	–	4.3%	1/3	0/3
9	Hoka	7	#6	#8	–	8.7%	2/3	0/3
10	Cole Haan	3	–	#11	–	2.2%	0/3	0/3

2 more brands named with lower scores. Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

Google Shopping cards	3
whowhatwear.com	3
runrepeat.com	2
carrymagazine.com	1

Plus 8 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Converse, Vans and Puma

QUOTE IT. Joint #1 in AI answers for "Best lifestyle sneaker brands": Nike and Adidas (AI Rank Score 87/100). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 8 OF 10

"Best shoe brands for standing all day at work"

Hoka is the clear AI pick for shoes for standing all day at work

13	100	All 3	11
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Hoka	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Hoka scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Brooks is a distant second at 67. The field is wide open: 13 brands are named and the top three take only 37% of mentions.

Exhibit 4.8

Hoka scores 100, out of 13 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best shoe brands for standing all day at work"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Hoka	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	17.7%	3/3	3/3
2	Brooks	67	#4	#2	#2	12.9%	3/3	0/3
3	New Balance	40	#2	#4	–	6.5%	2/3	0/3
4	Asics	30	#5	–	#3	3.2%	2/3	0/3
5	Skechers	23	#3	#7	–	8.1%	2/3	0/3
6	Dansko	20	–	#3	–	11.3%	1/3	0/3
7	Orthofeet	13	–	–	#4	1.6%	1/3	0/3
8	Vionic	10	–	#5	–	9.7%	1/3	0/3
9	Birkenstock	3	–	#6	–	6.5%	1/3	0/3
10	Clove	3	–	#8	–	6.5%	1/3	0/3

3 more brands named with lower scores. Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

Google Shopping cards	2
buyma.com	1
footgearlab.com	1
forbes.com	1

Plus 6 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Dansko, Clove and Timberland

> **QUOTE IT.** #1 in AI answers for "Best shoe brands for standing all day at work": Hoka (AI Rank Score 100/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 9 OF 10

"Best dress shoe brands for men"

Allen Edmonds is the clear AI pick for men's dress shoes

5	100	All 3	20
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Allen Edmonds	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 4 from brand sites

Allen Edmonds scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Alden is a distant second at 47. The field is narrow. Only 5 brands are named, and the top three take 75% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.9

Allen Edmonds scores 100, out of 5 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 5 brands for "Best dress shoe brands for men"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Allen Edmonds	100	#1	#1	#1	32.1%	3/3	3/3
2	Alden	47	–	#2	#3	28.6%	2/3	0/3
3	Johnston & Murphy	47	#3	–	#2	14.3%	2/3	0/3
4	Beckett Simonon	33	–	#3	#4	17.9%	2/3	0/3
5	Cole Haan	27	#2	–	–	7.1%	1/3	0/3

Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

Google Shopping cards		3
allenedmonds.com	1	1
aldenshoe.com	1	
johnstonmurphy.com		1

Plus 13 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Cole Haan

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best dress shoe brands for men": Allen Edmonds (AI Rank Score 100/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

2 · QUESTION 10 OF 10

"Best sandal and slide brands"

Birkenstock is the clear AI pick for sandals and slides

12	100	All 3	14
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Birkenstock	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 1 from brand sites

Birkenstock scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Teva is a distant second at 57. The field is wide open: 12 brands are named and the top three take only 36% of mentions.

Exhibit 4.10

Birkenstock scores 100, out of 12 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best sandal and slide brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Birkenstock	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	13.9%	3/3	3/3
2	Teva	57	#2	#6	#2	12.5%	3/3	0/3
3	Hoka	33	–	#4	#3	9.7%	2/3	0/3
4	Oofos	33	–	#3	#4	9.7%	1/3	0/3
5	Chaco	30	#3	#5	–	11.1%	2/3	0/3
6	Vionic	30	#6	#2	–	5.6%	2/3	0/3
7	Adidas	27	#4	#9	#5	11.1%	2/3	0/3
8	Nike	13	#5	#10	–	8.3%	2/3	0/3
9	OluKai	7	#7	#8	–	9.7%	2/3	0/3
10	Crocs	3	–	#11	–	2.8%	1/3	0/3

2 more brands named with lower scores. Engine columns show the brand's position in each answer (– = not named). Share of voice = share of all brand mentions in the three answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

SOURCES BEHIND THESE ANSWERS

Google Shopping cards	3
adidas.com	1
apartstyle.com	1
outdoorgearlab.com	1

Plus 8 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Crocs

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best sandal and slide brands": Birkenstock (AI Rank Score 100/100, recommended by 3 of 3 AI engines). Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026, powered by markaeo.com

3 · THE ENGINES DISAGREE

The three engines agree on the top pick only half the time

ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews name the same #1 brand for just five of the ten questions. They also answer in very different ways. Gemini writes the longest answers (about 1,240 words) and names the most brands, 8.6 per answer. Google AI Overviews keeps it short, at about 180 words and 5.4 brands, and it is the only engine that cites Google Shopping product cards.

For individual brands this matters. ChatGPT names New Balance in 80% of its answers, the highest visibility we saw for any brand on any engine. Google AI Overviews, meanwhile, puts Asics and Hoka first more often than the other two engines do.

Exhibit 5

Engines split on half of the footwear questions.

Brand ranked #1 by each engine, by question

QUESTION	CHATGPT	GEMINI	GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS	
Best basketball shoe	Nike	Nike	Nike	✓ All agree
Best tennis shoe	Nike	Asics	Asics	Split
Best running shoe	Brooks	Brooks	Asics	Split
Best walking shoe	Brooks	Brooks	Hoka	Split
Best trail running shoe	Salomon	Hoka	Hoka	Split
Best gym and training shoe	Nike	Nike	Nike	✓ All agree
Best lifestyle sneaker	Nike	Nike	Adidas	Split
Best shoe for standing all day at work	Hoka	Hoka	Hoka	✓ All agree
Best dress shoe for men	Allen Edmonds	Allen Edmonds	Allen Edmonds	✓ All agree
Best sandal and slide	Birkenstock	Birkenstock	Birkenstock	✓ All agree

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

Visibility and #1 picks by engine, top 6 brands (% of each engine's 10 answers / number of #1 picks)

BRAND	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS
Nike	60% / 4×#1	60% / 3×#1	50% / 2×#1
Hoka	60% / 1×#1	60% / 2×#1	60% / 3×#1
Adidas	50% / 0×#1	50% / 0×#1	60% / 1×#1
New Balance	80% / 0×#1	60% / 0×#1	50% / 0×#1
Brooks	40% / 2×#1	40% / 2×#1	40% / 0×#1
Asics	50% / 0×#1	40% / 1×#1	60% / 2×#1

4 · WHERE AI LEARNS ABOUT SHOES

Each engine draws on a different set of sources

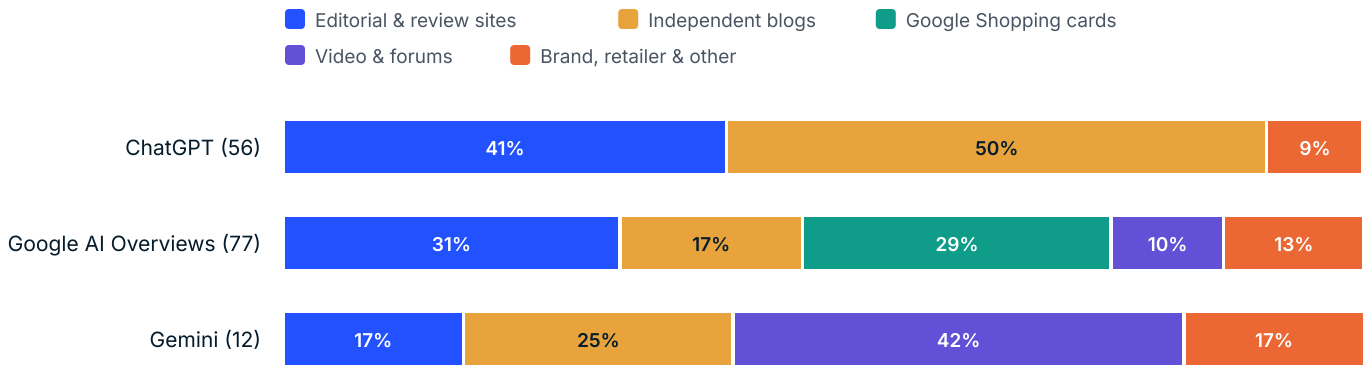
Across the ten questions, the engines cited 145 sources from 81 websites. Only 9 of those citations (6%) go to a brand's own website. Everything else comes from review labs, publishers, independent blogs, video, forums and retailers.

Each engine has its own habits. ChatGPT leans almost entirely on editorial reviews and independent blogs, and it did not cite a single Reddit thread or YouTube video for footwear. Google AI Overviews mixes editorial reviews with Google Shopping cards, YouTube and Reddit. Gemini cited sources in only 2 of its 10 footwear answers, which makes it the hardest engine to influence through sources.

Exhibit 6

Outside sources supply 94% of the citations behind AI shoe recommendations.

Share of cited sources by type and engine, %



Figures in brackets show how many sources each engine cited across the 10 questions. Gemini cited sources in 2 of its 10 answers.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

6%	0	29%	2 of 10
of citations come from brands' own websites	**Reddit or YouTube citations by ChatGPT in this category**	**of AI Overviews' citations are Google Shopping cards**	**Gemini answers that cite any source**

The leading brands are the main subject of the pages AI cites

We opened and read the 74 cited articles that were accessible, to see which brands each one covers. The leading brands each appear on about half of them. Appearing is the easy part. Nike and Hoka are the most covered brand on 33 of the 74 pages between them. New Balance appears on 51% of the pages and is the most covered brand on only 4. We think this explains much of its missing first places.

Exhibit 7

New Balance appears on half the cited pages but leads very few of them.

Share of 74 cited articles that mention each brand, number of articles where it is the most mentioned brand, and #1 picks

BRAND	MENTIONED ON CITED PAGES	PAGES WHERE IT IS THE MAIN BRAND	#1 PICKS (OF 30)
Nike	55%	17	9
Hoka	49%	16	6
Adidas	49%	4	1
New Balance	51%	4	0
Brooks	39%	3	4
Asics	39%	5	3

Based on the 74 of 115 cited article pages we could open. Video, social and Google Shopping links are excluded. A brand counts as the main brand on a page when it is mentioned more often than any other.

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

Exhibit 8

Eight websites carry the most weight in AI answers about shoes.

Most cited domains across 30 answers, with the engines that cited them and the brands they feature most

ChatGPT · Gemini · Google AI Overviews Number = citations by that engine

WEBSITE	CITATIONS	CITED BY	QUESTIONS	BRANDS IT FEATURES MOST
Google Shopping cards	22	22	10	Product listings
runrepeat.com	9	1, 8	7	New Balance, Nike, Adidas, Asics
youtube.com	8	4, 4	4	Video and discussion (not analyzed)
t3.com	6	5, 1	4	Hoka, Brooks, Nike, Reebok
reddit.com	5	1, 4	4	Video and discussion (not analyzed)
tomsguide.com	5	5	4	Hoka, Puma, Asics, Saucony
thefitville.com	3	3	3	Page could not be opened
fitandwell.com	3	2, 1	2	Hoka, Brooks, Allbirds, NOBULL

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

5 · WHAT LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

What leaders should do now

CEOs

- Track AI recommendation share next to market share and brand health. In footwear it already tells a different story from both.
- Ask your team for the top pick rate. Mentions alone flatter the brand.
- Fund this as a standing program. The engines change their answers every month, so a single campaign will fade.

CMOs

- Choose the questions you have to win ("best walking shoes", for example) and measure each engine on its own.
- Get your product to the top of reviews written for specific uses, such as flat feet or marathon training, as well as the general roundups.
- Treat Google Shopping product data as AEO work. It supplies 29% of AI Overviews' footwear citations.

Brand & PR teams

- Put review labs and tested roundups (RunRepeat, T3, Tom's Guide, OutdoorGearLab) ahead of general news coverage.
- Get honest product reviews onto YouTube and take part in real Reddit discussions. Google AI Overviews and Gemini cite both.
- Before chasing new placements, fix the pages where you are mentioned but another brand is covered first.

Agencies

- Report on a fixed set of questions, engine by engine, with the AI Rank Score and the top pick rate.
- Map the sources behind each competitor's #1 picks and plan coverage on those same sources.
- Benchmark results every month against the Answer Engine Daily index.

The footwear citation playbook: where to get cited

Every source below was cited by at least one engine while answering this month's ten footwear questions. The number in brackets is how often it was cited.

Must win

Cited across engines and questions

- RunRepeat (9 citations, 7 questions)
- YouTube reviews (8)
- Google Shopping product listings (22, AI Overviews only)
- Reddit (5)

Editorial

Shapes ChatGPT's and AI Overviews' shortlists

- T3 (6)
- Tom's Guide (5)
- OutdoorGearLab (3)
- Fit&Well (3)
- Who What Wear (3, lifestyle)
- Condé Nast Traveler (2)

Specialist & retail

Adds credibility on questions about specific uses

- Fleet Feet (2)
- REI (2)
- WearTesters (2, basketball)
- Independent fitness and running blogs

See the full picture for your brand

The public index shows where your brand stands this month. A private markaeo audit goes further. It benchmarks you against the competitors you name across hundreds of questions, tracks each engine every week and lists the exact pages behind each competitor's #1 picks. It also ties AI visibility to your traffic and revenue. **markaeo.com**

APPENDIX

Brand scorecard: the 20 highest ranked footwear brands

Exhibit A1

All eight index metrics for footwear.

Percentages are shares of the 30 AI answers. Missing counts questions where the brand sells in the segment but no engine named it

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	VISIBILITY	RECOM-MENDATION	TOP PICK	SHARE OF VOICE	ALL 3 ENGINES	SHOPPING CARDS	OWN-SITE CITES	MISSING
1	**Nike**	**43.7**	57%	57%	30%	12.4%	5/10	4	1	1 of 7
2	**Hoka**	**36.3**	60%	57%	20%	8.1%	4/10	0	0	0 of 5
3	**Adidas**	**31.7**	53%	47%	3%	6.7%	5/10	2	1	0 of 6
4	**New Balance**	**30.7**	63%	60%	0%	8.4%	5/10	2	1	0 of 7
5	**Brooks**	**29.3**	40%	40%	13%	5.9%	4/10	1	0	0 of 4
6	**Asics**	**26.3**	50%	47%	10%	6.3%	3/10	0	1	0 of 3
7	**Birkenstock**	**10.3**	13%	13%	10%	2.2%	1/10	2	0	0 of 1
8	**Allen Edmonds**	**10.0**	10%	10%	10%	1.4%	1/10	1	2	0 of 1
9	**Salomon**	**9.7**	20%	20%	3%	1.9%	1/10	1	0	0 of 1
10	**Reebok**	**8.3**	13%	10%	0%	2.1%	1/10	1	1	0 of 1
11	**Altra**	**7.0**	23%	23%	0%	4.1%	1/10	0	0	0 of 1
12	**Puma**	**6.7**	23%	20%	0%	3.0%	1/10	1	0	0 of 4
13	**Under Armour**	**6.3**	17%	13%	0%	1.9%	1/10	0	0	0 of 2
14	**Saucony**	**5.7**	20%	20%	0%	2.2%	2/10	0	0	0 of 2
15	**Teva**	**5.7**	10%	10%	0%	1.4%	1/10	0	0	0 of 1
16	**Vionic**	**5.3**	13%	13%	0%	2.5%	0/10	0	0	0 of 1
17	**Alden**	**4.7**	7%	7%	0%	1.3%	0/10	0	1	0 of 1
18	**Johnston & Murphy**	**4.7**	7%	7%	0%	0.6%	0/10	1	1	0 of 1
19	**Skechers**	**4.3**	17%	17%	0%	2.9%	0/10	0	0	0 of 2
20	**On**	**4.0**	27%	23%	0%	2.7%	0/10	0	0	0 of 2

Source: Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 · 10 questions × 3 engines (ChatGPT, Gemini, Google AI Overviews), 30 answers · analysis powered by markaeo.com

METHODOLOGY

How the index is built

Questions	Ten fixed buying questions that never name a brand.
Engines	ChatGPT (OpenAI), Gemini (Google) and Google AI Overviews, run on 21 October 2026. One answer per question per engine, 30 answers in all.
Location	All answers were collected from a single city in the United States. AI engines tailor answers to where the user is, so people asking the same questions from other cities, states or countries may see different brands, rankings and sources.
Brand detection	We match brand names and their product lines in each answer and checked samples of the matches by hand. Jordan, for example, counts as Nike.
Rank	A brand's position in the engine's list of recommendations. If an answer has no list, we use the order in which brands are named.
AI Rank Score	Points by position (#1 = 10, #2 = 8, #3 = 6, #4 = 4, #5 = 3, lower = 1, not named = 0), added up across engines and questions and scaled to 100.
Visibility	Share of the 30 answers that name the brand.
Recommendation rate	Share of answers that include the brand in the AI's list of picks.
Top pick rate	Share of answers that rank the brand #1.
Share of voice	The brand's share of all brand mentions in the category.
Missing	A major brand that sells in the segment but that none of the three engines named for that question.
Sources	We classified all 145 citations by type and read the 74 article pages we could open to see which brands each one covers.
Limitations	One run per engine, from one U.S. location. AI answers vary between runs, over time and by location. Gemini returned sources for 2 of its 10 footwear answers. The results describe what AI engines say, which is a separate question from product quality.

THE TEN FOOTWEAR QUESTIONS

1. Best basketball shoe brands
2. Best tennis shoe brands
3. Best running shoe brands
4. Best walking shoe brands
5. Best trail running shoe brands
6. Best gym and training shoe brands
7. Best lifestyle sneaker brands
8. Best shoe brands for standing all day at work
9. Best dress shoe brands for men
10. Best sandal and slide brands

ABOUT

About this index

Answer Engine Daily

answerenginedaily.com

Answer Engine Daily publishes a free monthly U.S. index of how AI engines rank brands. It tracks 200 buying questions across 20 consumer categories, including footwear, skincare, credit cards and airlines.

markaeo

markaeo.com

markaeo runs private AEO audits for brands and agencies. It benchmarks a brand against named competitors across hundreds of questions and tracks each engine separately. It also connects AI visibility to traffic and revenue.

How to cite this report

Brands named #1 may quote their result if they include the question, the month and a link, for example: "#1 in AI answers for 'Best running shoe brands', Answer Engine Daily AEO Index, U.S., October 2026 (answerenginedaily.com), powered by markaeo.com."

This report records how AI engines answered a fixed set of questions on one date. It says nothing about product quality. Brand names are trademarks of their owners and appear here for identification only. Results will move from month to month as the engines update.

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This report is an independent, observational study of how three third-party AI answer engines (ChatGPT by OpenAI, Gemini by Google and Google AI Overviews) answered a fixed set of ten buying questions about footwear. It records what those engines said. It is not a review, test, rating, certification or endorsement of any product, service, brand or company, and it makes no claim about the quality, safety, performance, value or suitability of anything named in it.

2. One location, one date

All answers were collected on 21 October 2026 from a single location in one city in the United States, with one query per question per engine. AI answers are personalized and change with location, time, device, account history, language and model updates, and the same question asked twice can produce a different answer. People in other cities, states or countries, or on other dates, may see different brands, rankings and sources. The findings describe these answers only. They are not representative of all users, all locations or the market as a whole.

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