Who AI Recommends: Headphones & Earbuds

How ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews rank 37 headphone and earbud brands on ten buying questions, and what it takes to be the brand they name first.

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ENGINES
ChatGPT · Gemini · Google AI Overviews
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PLEASE READ FIRST

Important notice and disclaimer

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AT A GLANCE

The headphones and earbuds category in numbers

30
AI answers analyzed
10 buying questions × 3 engines

37
headphone and earbud brands named
by at least one engine

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

2%
of citations point to brands' own websites
3 of 178 sources

73%
of answers mention Bose
level with Sony

1
time Bose is ranked #1
out of 30 answers

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 headphones and earbuds through ten buying questions, from wireless earbuds to gaming headsets.

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sony is AI's first pick for headphones, and Bose keeps coming second

When AI recommends headphones and earbuds, Sony is the brand it names first. Sony leads the index and wins five of the ten questions. Bose is named just as often and is ranked first only once. Specialists win the niche questions, and 98% of what the engines cite comes from someone other than the brand.

KEY FINDINGS

1 **Sony leads and wins half the questions.**
Sony tops the index with an AI Rank Score of 57.3 and is named first in 12 of 30 answers, the most of any brand. Its wins are wireless earbuds, over-ear, noise-cancelling, phone calls and the overall question. Bose (51.7) is close on score, and Anker Soundcore and Apple tie at 27.7.

2 **Bose is everywhere and almost never first.**
Bose appears in 73% of answers, level with Sony, and in 70% of ChatGPT's. Only once is it ranked first, by Gemini on noise-cancelling headphones. Apple shows a smaller gap of the same kind, with 53% visibility and one first place. Shoppers act on the first name an AI gives them.

3 **Specialists win the niche questions.**
Beats takes running, Anker Soundcore takes budget earbuds and SteelSeries takes gaming headsets. Shokz wins open-ear, and Ozlo wins sleep earbuds. SteelSeries, Shokz and Ozlo each appear in 27% of answers or fewer, yet they win their questions with scores of 93 to 100.

4 **The engines agree on four questions out of ten.**
ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews pick the same top brand for 4 of the 10 questions. On phone calls, Gemini and AI Overviews both rank Jabra first, yet Sony takes the question with ChatGPT's first place and high positions on the other two. Brands have to track each engine separately.

5 **AI learns about headphones from review sites.**
Of the 178 sources the engines cited, 98% belong to someone other than the brand. TechRadar, RTINGS, SoundGuys, Tom's Guide and What Hi-Fi? top the list. Google Shopping cards make up 32% of AI Overviews' citations. Brands' own websites supply just 3 citations.

6 **Samsung is almost absent.**
Samsung is missing from 6 of the 7 questions where it competes. Jabra misses 4 of 6, even though it places second on phone calls. JBL is absent from 2 of 7, and Beats does not appear on the overall headphones question.

1 · THE HEADPHONES AND EARBUDS LEADERBOARD

Sony leads the AI shelf for headphones, with Bose close behind

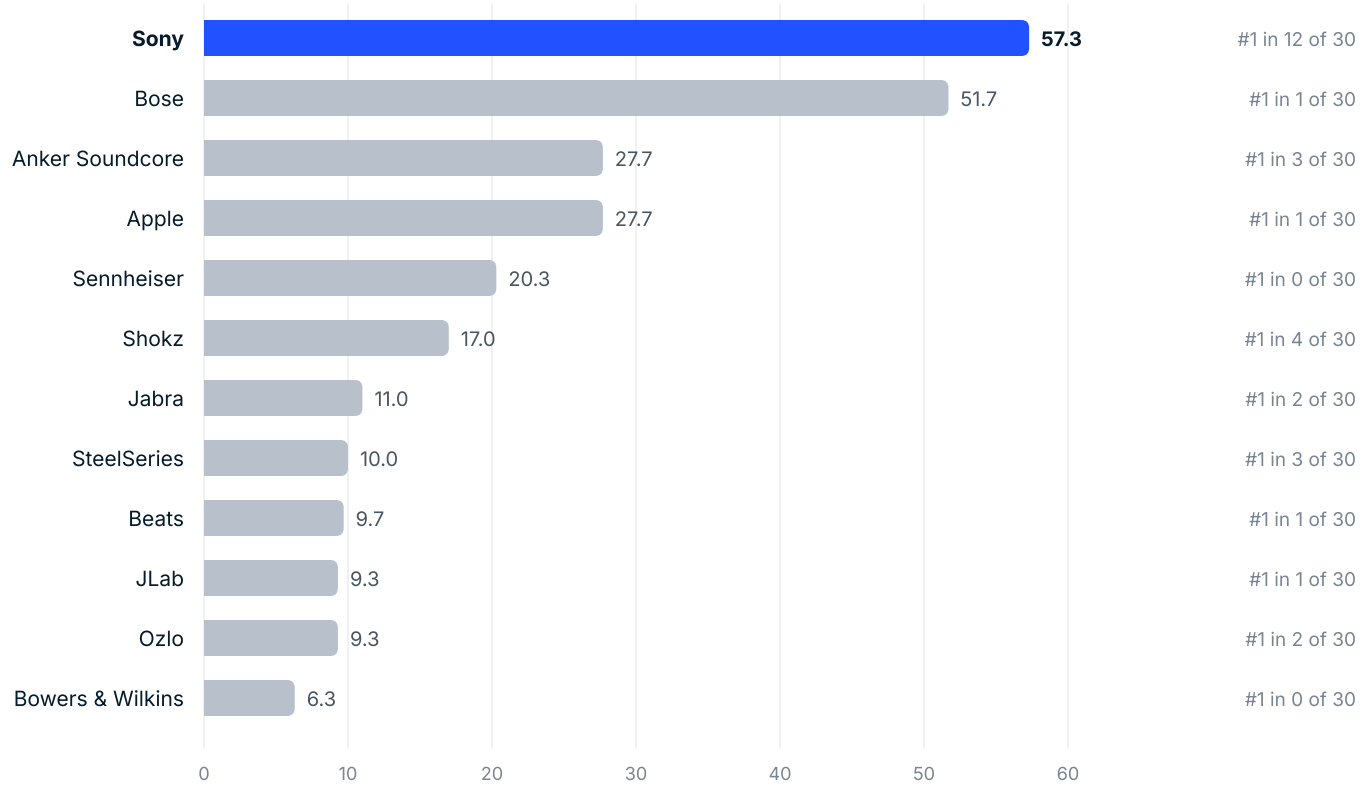
The AI Rank Score measures how high each engine places a brand in its recommendations across all ten questions. A perfect 100 would mean being named first by all three engines on every question. This category runs from gaming headsets to sleep earbuds, so no brand gets near that.

Sony's lead comes from five question wins and the highest top pick rate in the category (40%). Bose reaches a similar score almost entirely through high placements, with one first place. After the top two, scores fall to 27.7 or lower. Specialists such as SteelSeries and Ozlo win their one question and are rarely named on the others.

Exhibit 1

Sony ranks first on the AI Rank Score, and Bose is second.

AI Rank Score, headphones and earbuds 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

Bose is named as often as Sony, yet chosen first only once

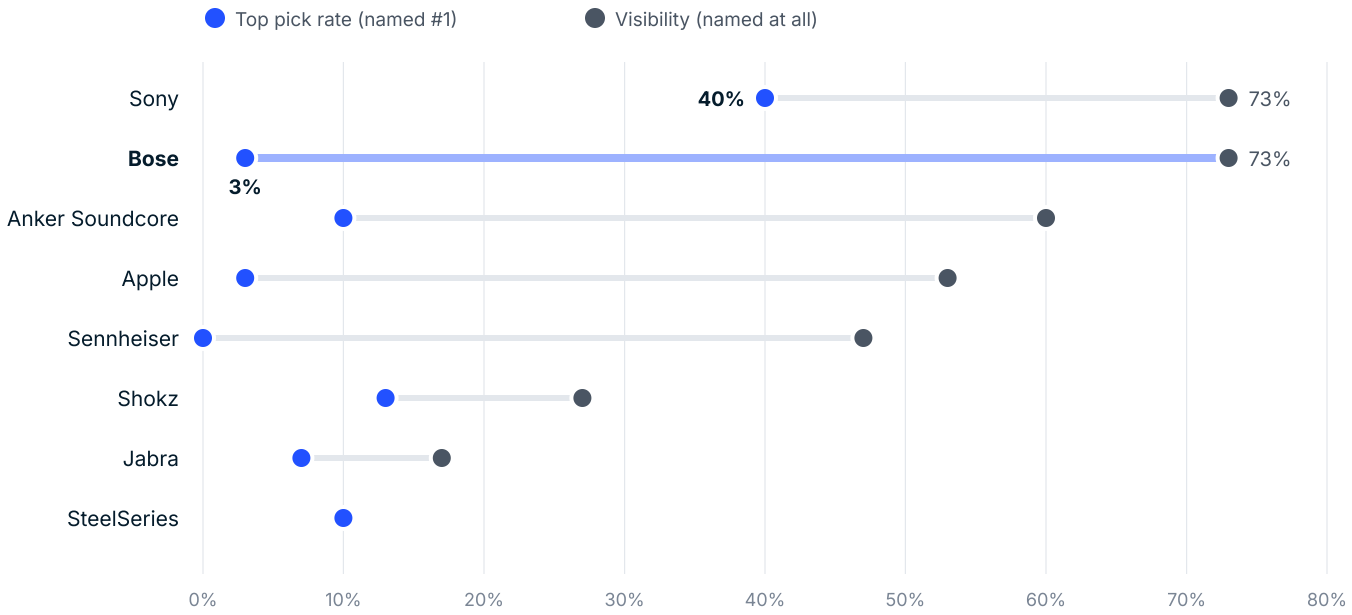
Visibility counts how often a brand is named at all, and the top pick rate counts how often it is named first. The gap between them tells us whether an engine treats a brand as the answer or as one more option on the list.

No brand has a wider gap than Bose. It is named in 73% of answers, the same as Sony, and is the first pick in 3%. ChatGPT names it more than any other brand and never ranks it first. Anker Soundcore and Apple repeat the pattern on a smaller scale. Sony turns visibility into first places far more often.

Exhibit 2

Bose matches Sony on visibility, yet it is almost never ranked 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. A shopper who asks for "the best noise-cancelling headphone brands" usually reads the first name or two and stops there. Brands in fourth or fifth place are still seen. They are rarely bought.

2 · WINNERS AND LOSERS, QUESTION BY QUESTION

Six brands share the ten #1 spots in headphones and earbuds

Taken question by question, the category splits in two. Sony wins the broad questions: earbuds, over-ear, noise-cancelling, calls and overall. Specialists take the rest, and SteelSeries and Ozlo each win while appearing in only 10% of all answers. Because the products here differ so much, the question pages that follow are the better guide.

Exhibit 3

Sony wins the broad questions, and specialists win the niches.

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

	Wireless earbuds	Over-ear	Noise-cancel	Running	Budget earbuds	Phone calls	Gaming	Open-ear	Sleep	Overall
Sony	**93**	**100**	**93**	33	13	**80**	3	47	10	**100**
Bose	73	80	87	17	–	60	–	80	40	80
Anker Soundcore	7	17	3	10	**93**	3	–	53	87	3
Apple	73	47	40	33	–	30	–	–	13	40
Sennheiser	30	53	43	–	–	13	3	–	–	60
Shokz	3	–	–	63	–	3	–	**100**	–	–
Jabra	–	–	–	33	–	77	–	–	–	–
SteelSeries	–	–	–	–	–	–	**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

Choose the uses where your product genuinely is the best option, and build coverage around them. Shokz, SteelSeries and Ozlo each own a question with little visibility elsewhere. Broad brands need to check every question for gaps. Bose places second on several big questions and wins none of them, and Samsung is missing almost everywhere.

Exhibit 4

Winners and losers on every headphone and earbud question.

Winner and runner-up by AI Rank Score

#	QUESTION	WINNER (SCORE)	RUNNER-UP	DETAIL
1	Best wireless earbud brands	**Sony** 93	Apple 73	p. 9
2	Best over-ear headphone brands	**Sony** 100	Bose 80	p. 10
3	Best noise-cancelling headphone brands	**Sony** 93	Bose 87	p. 11
4	Best earbud brands for running	**Beats** 87	Shokz 63	p. 12
5	Best budget earbud brands	**Anker Soundcore** 93	JLab 80	p. 13
6	Best headphone brands for phone calls	**Sony** 80	Jabra 77	p. 14
7	Best gaming headset brands	**SteelSeries** 100	Razer 60	p. 15
8	Best open-ear headphone brands	**Shokz** 100	Bose 80	p. 16
9	Best earbud brands for sleeping	**Ozlo** 93	Anker Soundcore 87	p. 17
10	Best headphone brands overall	**Sony** 100	Bose 80	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 headphone brands overall": Sony (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

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 wireless earbud brands"

Sony is the clear AI pick for wireless earbuds

14	93	2 of 3	16
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Sony	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Sony scores 93. Two of the three engines rank it first. Google AI Overviews puts it at #2 and picks Apple instead. Apple is a distant second at 73. In total 14 brands are named, and the top three take 48% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.1

Sony scores 93, out of 14 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best wireless earbud brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Sony	93	**#1**	**#1**	#2	12.9%	3/3	2/3
2	Apple	73	#3	#3	**#1**	25.9%	3/3	1/3
3	Bose	73	#2	#2	#3	9.4%	3/3	0/3
4	Sennheiser	30	#4	#6	#4	9.4%	3/3	0/3
5	Technics	13	–	#7	#5	7.1%	2/3	0/3
6	Samsung	13	–	#4	–	8.2%	1/3	0/3
7	Google	10	–	#5	–	3.5%	1/3	0/3
8	JBL	10	#5	–	–	1.2%	1/3	0/3
9	Anker Soundcore	7	–	#11	#6	9.4%	2/3	0/3
10	Beats	3	–	#9	–	7.1%	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

whathifi.com	2
amazon.com	1
audiocom.hk	1
crutchfield.com	1

Plus 11 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Samsung, Beats and JBL

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best wireless earbud brands": Sony (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 2 OF 10

"Best over-ear headphone brands"

Sony is the clear AI pick for over-ear headphones

15	100	All 3	12
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Sony	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Sony scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Bose is a distant second at 80. The field is wide open: 15 brands are named and the top three take only 37% of mentions.

Exhibit 4.2

Sony scores 100, out of 15 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best over-ear headphone brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Sony	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	13.9%	3/3	3/3
2	Bose	80	#2	#2	#2	13.9%	3/3	0/3
3	Sennheiser	53	#3	#4	#3	9.3%	3/3	0/3
4	Apple	47	#4	#3	#4	16.7%	3/3	0/3
5	Anker Soundcore	17	#5	#12	#6	10.2%	3/3	0/3
6	Bowers & Wilkins	13	–	#10	#5	4.6%	2/3	0/3
7	Focal	10	–	#5	–	10.2%	1/3	0/3
8	Audio-Technica	7	#7	#8	–	3.7%	2/3	0/3
9	Beyerdynamic	7	#8	#9	–	2.8%	2/3	0/3
10	AKG	3	#10	–	–	1.9%	1/3	0/3

5 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
bestbuy.com	1
bestechview.com	1
cnet.com	1

Plus 7 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Beats and JBL

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best over-ear headphone brands": Sony (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 3 OF 10

"Best noise-cancelling headphone brands"

Sony leads AI answers for noise-cancelling headphones, ahead of Bose

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

Sony scores 93. Two of the three engines rank it first. Gemini puts it at #2 and picks Bose instead. Bose is close behind at 87, so this question could change hands next month. In total 8 brands are named, and the top three take 50% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.3

Sony scores 93, out of 8 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 8 brands for "Best noise-cancelling headphone brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Sony	93	**#1**	#2	**#1**	19.1%	3/3	2/3
2	Bose	87	#2	**#1**	#2	18.1%	3/3	1/3
3	Sennheiser	43	#4	#5	#3	12.8%	3/3	0/3
4	Apple	40	#3	#3	–	24.5%	2/3	0/3
5	Bowers & Wilkins	23	#5	#4	–	6.4%	2/3	0/3
6	Anker Soundcore	3	–	#6	–	11.7%	1/3	0/3
7	Beats	3	–	#7	–	4.3%	1/3	0/3
8	Marshall	3	#6	–	–	3.2%	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
whathifi.com	1	1
cartiq.net	1	
chrislovesjulia.com		1

Plus 7 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Beats and Anker Soundcore

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best noise-cancelling headphone brands": Sony (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 earbud brands for running"

Beats leads AI answers for running earbuds, ahead of Shokz

11	87	None	15
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Beats	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Beats scores 87, although only ChatGPT ranks it first. Shokz is a distant second at 63. Each engine picks a different #1: ChatGPT chooses Beats, Gemini Shokz and Google AI Overviews Sony. In total 11 brands are named, and the top three take 50% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.4

Beats scores 87, out of 11 brands named.

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

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Beats	87	**#1**	#2	#2	16.2%	3/3	1/3
2	Shokz	63	#2	**#1**	#6	12.5%	2/3	1/3
3	Apple	33	#4	#3	–	21.2%	2/3	0/3
4	Jabra	33	#3	#4	–	11.2%	2/3	0/3
5	Sony	33	–	–	**#1**	1.2%	1/3	1/3
6	JBL	20	–	–	#3	1.2%	0/3	0/3
7	Bose	17	–	#6	#4	12.5%	1/3	0/3
8	JLab	13	#5	–	#8	2.5%	1/3	0/3
9	Anker Soundcore	10	–	#5	–	18.8%	1/3	0/3
10	Bowers & Wilkins	10	–	–	#5	1.2%	0/3	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

techradar.com	2
220triathlon.com	1
ebay.ca	1
electronnexus.com	1

Plus 10 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Sony and JBL

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best earbud brands for running": Beats (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 5 OF 10

"Best budget earbud brands"

Anker Soundcore leads AI answers for budget earbuds, ahead of JLab

7	93	2 of 3	18
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Anker Soundcore	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 1 from brand sites

Anker Soundcore scores 93. Two of the three engines rank it first. ChatGPT puts it at #2 and picks JLab instead. JLab follows at 80. The field is narrow. Only 7 brands are named, and the top three take 61% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.5

Anker Soundcore scores 93, out of 7 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 7 brands for "Best budget earbud brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Anker Soundcore	93	#2	**#1**	**#1**	30.3%	3/3	2/3
2	JLab	80	**#1**	#2	#3	18.2%	3/3	1/3
3	EarFun	47	–	#3	#2	12.1%	2/3	0/3
4	TOZO	30	#3	#5	–	9.1%	2/3	0/3
5	JBL	27	#4	–	#4	4.5%	2/3	0/3
6	Moondrop	13	#5	#6	–	12.1%	2/3	0/3
7	Sony	13	–	#4	–	13.6%	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
cartiq.net	1
cnet.com	1
complyfoam.com	1

Plus 12 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Sony

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best budget earbud brands": Anker Soundcore (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 headphone brands for phone calls"

Sony edges out Jabra for phone calls

9	80	2 of 3	27
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Sony	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Sony scores 80, although only ChatGPT ranks it first. Jabra is close behind at 77, so this question could change hands next month. Gemini and Google AI Overviews put Jabra first, while ChatGPT goes with Sony. In total 9 brands are named, and the top three take 48% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.6

Sony scores 80, out of 9 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 9 brands for "Best headphone brands for phone calls"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Sony	80	**#1**	#3	#2	16.4%	3/3	1/3
2	Jabra	77	#5	**#1**	**#1**	13.4%	3/3	2/3
3	Bose	60	#2	#4	#3	17.9%	3/3	0/3
4	Apple	30	#3	#5	–	19.4%	2/3	0/3
5	Plantronics/Poly	27	–	#2	–	7.5%	1/3	0/3
6	Sennheiser	13	#4	–	–	3.0%	1/3	0/3
7	Anker Soundcore	3	–	#8	–	10.4%	1/3	0/3
8	Shokz	3	–	#7	–	7.5%	1/3	0/3
9	Technics	3	–	#6	–	4.5%	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
pcmag.com	1	1
whathifi.com		2
cnet.com	1	1

Plus 15 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Sennheiser and Plantronics/Poly

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best headphone brands for phone calls": Sony (AI Rank Score 80/100, 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 gaming headset brands"

SteelSeries is the clear AI pick for gaming headsets

11	100	All 3	14
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for SteelSeries	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

SteelSeries scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Razer is a distant second at 60. In total 11 brands are named, and the top three take 41% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.7

SteelSeries scores 100, out of 11 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best gaming headset brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	SteelSeries	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	14.7%	3/3	3/3
2	Razer	60	#2	#4	#3	13.3%	3/3	0/3
3	Audeze	57	#6	#2	#2	13.3%	3/3	0/3
4	HyperX	53	#3	#3	#4	14.7%	3/3	0/3
5	Logitech	33	#4	#5	#5	21.3%	3/3	0/3
6	Turtle Beach	13	#5	#6	–	6.7%	2/3	0/3
7	Beyerdynamic	3	–	#9	–	5.3%	1/3	0/3
8	Corsair	3	#7	–	–	2.7%	1/3	0/3
9	EPOS	3	–	#8	–	2.7%	1/3	0/3
10	Sennheiser	3	–	#7	–	4.0%	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		3
soundguys.com	1	1
amazon.com		1
bestbuy.com		1

Plus 7 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Corsair and Sony

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best gaming headset brands": SteelSeries (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 8 OF 10

"Best open-ear headphone brands"

Shokz is the clear AI pick for open-ear headphones

7	100	All 3	23
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Shokz	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 1 from brand sites

Shokz scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Bose is a distant second at 80. The field is narrow. Only 7 brands are named, and the top three take 69% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.8

Shokz scores 100, out of 7 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 7 brands for "Best open-ear headphone brands"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Shokz	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	25.4%	3/3	3/3
2	Bose	80	#2	#2	#2	19.4%	3/3	0/3
3	Anker Soundcore	53	#4	#3	#3	23.9%	3/3	0/3
4	Sony	47	#3	#4	#4	11.9%	3/3	0/3
5	Nothing	23	#5	#7	#5	7.5%	3/3	0/3
6	Oladance	10	–	#5	–	6.0%	1/3	0/3
7	Cleer	3	–	#6	–	6.0%	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

rtings.com	1	1
bestbuy.com	1	1
techlicious.com	1	1
soundguys.com	1	1

Plus 15 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE None of the expected brands.

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best open-ear headphone brands": Shokz (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 earbud brands for sleeping"

Ozlo leads AI answers for sleep earbuds, ahead of Anker Soundcore

5	93	2 of 3	27
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Ozlo	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, 1 from brand sites

Ozlo scores 93. Two of the three engines rank it first. Gemini puts it at #2 and picks Anker Soundcore instead. Anker Soundcore is close behind at 87, so this question could change hands next month. The field is narrow. Only 5 brands are named, and the top three take 91% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.9

Ozlo scores 93, out of 5 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 5 brands for "Best earbud brands for sleeping"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Ozlo	93	**#1**	#2	**#1**	37.1%	3/3	2/3
2	Anker Soundcore	87	#2	**#1**	#2	40.0%	3/3	1/3
3	Bose	40	#3	#3	–	14.3%	2/3	0/3
4	Apple	13	–	#4	–	5.7%	0/3	0/3
5	Sony	10	–	#5	–	2.9%	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	6
tomsguide.com	3
youtube.com	2
ozlosleep.ca	1

Plus 15 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE Apple and Sony

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best earbud brands for sleeping": Ozlo (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 10 OF 10

"Best headphone brands overall"

Sony is the clear AI pick for headphones overall

12	100	All 3	12
brands named across the three answers	AI Rank Score for Sony	engines agree on the #1 brand	sources cited, none from brand sites

Sony scores 100 and is the first pick on all three engines. Bose is a distant second at 80. In total 12 brands are named, and the top three take 43% of all brand mentions.

Exhibit 4.10

Sony scores 100, out of 12 brands named.

AI Rank Score and engine positions, top 10 brands for "Best headphone brands overall"

#	BRAND	AI RANK SCORE	CHATGPT	GEMINI	AI OVERVIEWS	SHARE OF VOICE	RECOM-MENDED	#1 PICK
1	Sony	100	**#1**	**#1**	**#1**	15.9%	3/3	3/3
2	**Bose**	80	#2	#2	#2	17.1%	3/3	0/3
3	**Sennheiser**	60	#3	#3	#3	9.8%	3/3	0/3
4	**Apple**	40	#4	#4	#4	20.7%	3/3	0/3
5	**Audio-Technica**	20	#5	#5	–	6.1%	2/3	0/3
6	**Bowers & Wilkins**	13	#7	–	#5	3.7%	2/3	0/3
7	**Anker Soundcore**	3	–	#9	–	9.8%	1/3	0/3
8	**Beyerdynamic**	3	–	#6	–	3.7%	1/3	0/3
9	**Focal**	3	–	#7	–	4.9%	1/3	0/3
10	**HiFiMAN**	3	–	#8	–	2.4%	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
techradar.com	1	1
tomsguide.com	1	1
digitaltrends.com		1

Plus 4 more sites.

WHO IS MISSING

NAMED BY ONLY 1 ENGINE JBL and Anker Soundcore

QUOTE IT. #1 in AI answers for "Best headphone brands overall": Sony (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 engines agree on the top pick for only four of ten questions

ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews name the same #1 brand for four questions: over-ear, gaming headsets, open-ear and overall. Their answers look very different, too. Gemini writes the longest (about 1,140 words) and names 8.2 brands, while Google AI Overviews stops at about 170 words and 4.8 brands.

ChatGPT gives Sony five first places and names Bose more than any other brand. Gemini is the kindest to Anker Soundcore, naming it in 90% of answers and ranking it first twice. Google AI Overviews puts Apple first for wireless earbuds, though it names Apple in only 30% of its answers.

Exhibit 5

Engines split on six of the ten headphone and earbud questions.

Brand ranked #1 by each engine, by question

QUESTION	CHATGPT	GEMINI	GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS	
Best wireless earbud	Sony	Sony	Apple	Split
Best over-ear headphone	Sony	Sony	Sony	✓ All agree
Best noise-cancelling headphone	Sony	Bose	Sony	Split
Best earbud for running	Beats	Shokz	Sony	Split
Best budget earbud	JLab	Anker Soundcore	Anker Soundcore	Split
Best headphone for phone calls	Sony	Jabra	Jabra	Split
Best gaming headset	SteelSeries	SteelSeries	SteelSeries	✓ All agree
Best open-ear headphone	Shokz	Shokz	Shokz	✓ All agree
Best earbud for sleeping	Ozlo	Anker Soundcore	Ozlo	Split
Best headphone overall	Sony	Sony	Sony	✓ 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
Sony	60% / 5×#1	90% / 3×#1	70% / 4×#1
Bose	70% / 0×#1	80% / 1×#1	70% / 0×#1
Anker Soundcore	40% / 0×#1	90% / 2×#1	50% / 1×#1
Apple	60% / 0×#1	70% / 0×#1	30% / 1×#1
Sennheiser	50% / 0×#1	50% / 0×#1	40% / 0×#1
Shokz	20% / 1×#1	40% / 2×#1	20% / 1×#1

4 · WHERE AI LEARNS ABOUT HEADPHONES

Review sites lead the sources AI cites for headphones

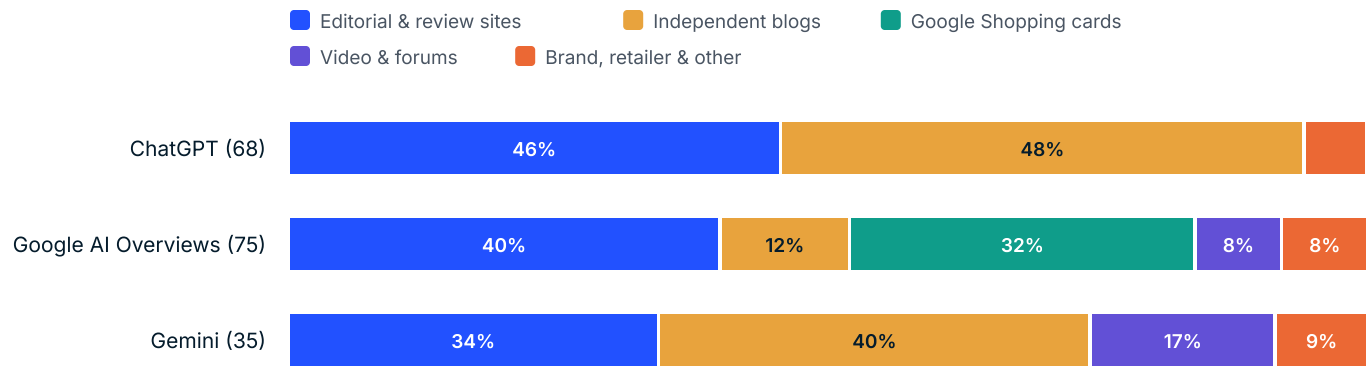
Across the ten questions, the engines cited 178 sources from 81 websites. Just 3 of those citations (1.7%) lead to a brand's own website. The rest come from review sites, independent blogs, retailers, Reddit, YouTube and Google Shopping.

ChatGPT divides its citations between editorial reviews and independent blogs, and it cited no Reddit or YouTube pages. Google AI Overviews relies on editorial reviews (40%) and Google Shopping cards (32%). Gemini cited sources in 3 of its 10 answers, and 17.1% of those came from video and forums.

Exhibit 6

Outside sources supply 98% of the citations behind AI headphone 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 3 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

2%	0	32%	3 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

Apple and Anker Soundcore lead the cited pages

We read 90 cited articles. Apple is the main brand on 19 of them and Anker Soundcore on 18. Sony and Bose lead 13 each.

Exhibit 7

Apple leads more cited pages than any rival, yet it is ranked first only once.

Share of 90 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)
Sony	66%	13	12
Bose	72%	13	1
Anker Soundcore	56%	18	3
Apple	68%	19	1
Sennheiser	31%	1	0
Shokz	27%	3	4

Based on the 90 of 140 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 headphones.

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	24	24	8	Product listings
techradar.com	11	9 · 2	9	Apple, Sony, Bose, JBL
rtings.com	10	4 · 6	8	Page could not be opened
soundguys.com	9	2 · 1 · 6	7	Sony, Bose, Apple, Anker Soundcore
tomsguide.com	8	6 · 1 · 1	5	Apple, Bose, Anker Soundcore, JLab
whathifi.com	8	6 · 2	5	Apple, Sony, Bose, JBL
reddit.com	7	3 · 4	6	Video and discussion (not analyzed)
cnet.com	6	2 · 4	5	Apple, Bose, Samsung, Logitech

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 alongside market share and brand health. In headphones they can diverge.
- Ask your team for the top pick rate. Bose's 73% visibility comes with a single first place.
- Fund this as an ongoing program. The engines change their answers every month, and a one-off campaign will fade.

CMOs

- Pick the questions you must win ("best earbud brands for running", for example) and measure each engine separately.
- Get your product to the top of reviews for specific uses, such as calls, sleep or running, and of the general roundups too.
- Treat Google Shopping product data as part of AEO. It supplies 32% of AI Overviews' headphone citations.

Brand & PR teams

- Prioritize tested reviews (RTINGS, SoundGuys, TechRadar, What Hi-Fi?, CNET) over general news coverage.
- Join real Reddit discussions. Gemini and AI Overviews cited Reddit 7 times across 6 questions.
- Start with pages that already mention you but cover another brand first. New placements can wait.

Agencies

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

The headphone citation playbook: where to get cited

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

Must win

Cited across engines and questions

- TechRadar (11 citations, 9 questions)
- RTINGS (10, 8 questions)
- SoundGuys (9, all three engines)
- Google Shopping product listings (24, AI Overviews only)

Editorial

Shapes ChatGPT's and AI Overviews' shortlists

- Tom's Guide (8)
- What Hi-Fi? (8)
- CNET (6)

Community & retail

Lends credibility on questions about specific uses

- Reddit (7)
- Best Buy (5)
- YouTube (5)
- Amazon (3, AI Overviews)

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 headphones and earbuds brands

Exhibit A1

All eight index metrics for headphones and earbuds.

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	**Sony**	**57.3**	73%	67%	40%	11.6%	6/10	4	0	0 of 10
2	**Bose**	**51.7**	73%	70%	3%	12.4%	6/10	2	0	0 of 8
3	**Anker Soundcore**	**27.7**	60%	60%	10%	14.5%	4/10	3	0	0 of 7
4	**Apple**	**27.7**	53%	50%	3%	14.8%	3/10	1	0	0 of 7
5	**Sennheiser**	**20.3**	47%	47%	0%	5.7%	4/10	1	0	0 of 5
6	**Shokz**	**17.0**	27%	23%	13%	4.3%	2/10	0	1	0 of 2
7	**Jabra**	**11.0**	17%	17%	7%	2.4%	1/10	1	0	4 of 6
8	**SteelSeries**	**10.0**	10%	10%	10%	1.4%	1/10	2	0	0 of 1
9	**Beats**	**9.7**	20%	20%	3%	3.3%	1/10	0	0	1 of 5
10	**JLab**	**9.3**	17%	13%	3%	1.8%	1/10	3	0	0 of 1
11	**Ozlo**	**9.3**	10%	10%	7%	1.7%	1/10	1	1	0 of 1
12	**Bowers & Wilkins**	**6.3**	27%	23%	0%	2.1%	0/10	1	0	–
13	**JBL**	**6.3**	20%	17%	0%	1.3%	0/10	1	1	2 of 7
14	**Audeze**	**6.0**	13%	13%	0%	2.0%	1/10	0	0	0 of 1
15	**Razer**	**6.0**	10%	10%	0%	1.3%	1/10	0	0	0 of 1
16	**HyperX**	**5.3**	10%	10%	0%	1.4%	1/10	0	0	0 of 1
17	**EarFun**	**5.0**	10%	10%	0%	1.2%	0/10	0	0	0 of 1
18	**Logitech**	**3.3**	10%	10%	0%	2.1%	1/10	1	0	1 of 2
19	**Nothing**	**3.0**	17%	13%	0%	1.1%	1/10	0	0	0 of 1
20	**TOZO**	**3.0**	7%	7%	0%	0.8%	0/10	0	0	–

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. AirPods count as Apple, while Beats is tracked as its own brand.
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 178 citations by type and read the 90 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 3 of its 10 headphones and earbuds answers. The results describe what AI engines say, which is a separate question from product quality.

THE TEN HEADPHONES AND EARBUDS QUESTIONS

1. Best wireless earbud brands
2. Best over-ear headphone brands
3. Best noise-cancelling headphone brands
4. Best earbud brands for running
5. Best budget earbud brands
6. Best headphone brands for phone calls
7. Best gaming headset brands
8. Best open-ear headphone brands
9. Best earbud brands for sleeping
10. Best headphone brands overall

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 headphone brands overall', 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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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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