

OCTOBER 2026

.Best Domains: The SEO and GEO Advantage

How a .Best domain earns more clicks in search and ads, and more citations in AI answers: the evidence, the mechanisms and a playbook.

+20%

more clicks on
identical ads

GlobeRunner, Google Ads

-8%

lower cost per click

Same test

24.3%

of ChatGPT advice
searches add "best"

Peec AI, 5M fan-outs

43.8%

of pages ChatGPT
cites are "best X" lists

Ahrefs, 26,283 URLs

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About this paper

Every figure is taken from its original source, linked in the text and listed in the Sources (50 entries). Where a mechanism is described rather than measured for .Best directly, the text says how the link is made. Read online and share: domains.best/white-paper.

Disclosure: domains.best is the registry operator of .Best.

01

Executive summary

A .Best domain is built to earn more clicks, and clicks now drive both search rankings and AI visibility. .Best starts on equal footing with .com in Google, then gains through click-through rate in SEO and paid search, and through its name in generative engine optimization (GEO).

Key findings

Finding	Evidence
.Best ads earned 20% more clicks than identical .com ads	GlobeRunner controlled Google Ads test, four sectors
.Best ads paid 8% less per click , up to 21% less for movers	Same test, identical bids and landing pages
Google's ranking systems learn from clicks	Google's "How Search Works"; Navboost testimony in <i>U.S. v. Google</i> ; 2024 leak confirmed authentic by Google
Expected CTR is part of Ad Rank in every auction	Google Ads Help
ChatGPT adds "best" to 24.3% of its searches for advice questions	Peec AI, 5 million fan-out queries
"Best X" lists are 43.8% of pages ChatGPT cites, the largest type	Ahrefs, 26,283 source URLs
Brand mentions are the top predictor of AI Overview visibility (0.664)	Ahrefs, 75,000 brands
Cited brands earn 35% more organic clicks	Seer Interactive, 3,119 queries
55% of users expect a clear link between a site and its extension	Nielsen for ICANN, 24 countries

How .Best works

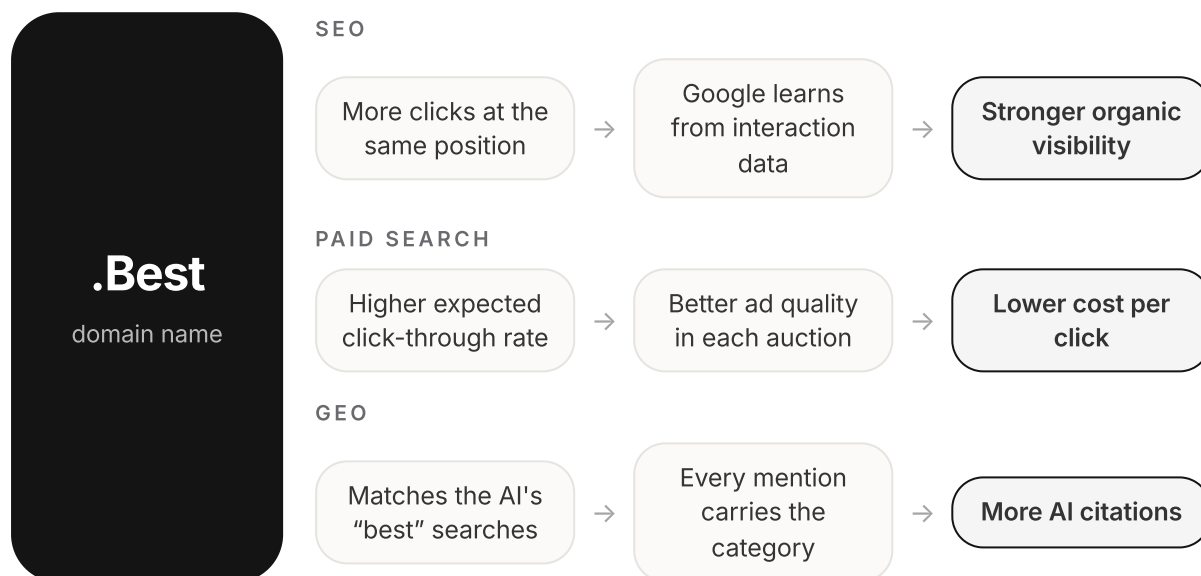
- 1. SEO: through the click.** The domain is now one of the most visible parts of every result. A name that repeats the searcher's word wins more clicks at the same position, and Google's systems learn from those interactions.
- 2. Paid search: through quality.** Higher click-through rate supports ad quality, and in the only controlled test .Best ads were cheaper per click.
- 3. GEO: through the name.** AI assistants search for "best" and cite "best" lists. A .Best name matches the query, and carries its category into every brand mention and link, the signals most

closely tied to AI visibility.

4. **Conversion: through meaning.** Meaningful, fluent names are judged more favourably and remembered better, bringing visitors back without another paid click.

One name, three paths to visibility

How a .Best domain works in organic search, paid search and AI answers



How .Best works · three paths from the name to visibility

What to do

Choose a name that pairs a category with .best, publish comparison content with sourced figures and regular updates, put the domain in every ad's display URL, and measure the gain with the split tests described in this paper.

02

Introduction

The web is being reorganized around recommendations: people ask search engines and AI assistants what is best, and those systems answer with a short list of sources. In that world, a domain name that says "best" is no longer just an address. It is a statement of intent that searchers read, that AI engines search for, and that ranking systems learn from through the clicks it earns.

The .Best top-level domain

.Best is a generic top-level domain delegated in the internet's root zone, with the same technical standing as .com, .net and .org.

Item	Detail
Type	Generic top-level domain (gTLD)
ICANN registry agreement	Signed 19 December 2013 (ICANN)
Delegated in the root zone	27 February 2014 (IANA)
Registry operator	Best TLD Pty Ltd
Registry services	CentralNic, one of the leading registry back-end providers
Security	DNSSEC, registry lock and abuse prevention (domains.best)
Availability	Sold through 300+ registrars (registry figure), from about \$1 for a first year at entry level (TLD-List)
Registry website	domains.best

Why domain names matter again

Three shifts have brought the domain back to the centre of search strategy:

- 1. The domain is more visible.** Google now shows the site name, favicon and, on mobile, only the bare domain for each result, so the name carries more of each result's identity than at any time in the past decade.
- 2. Clicks are scarcer and worth more.** AI summaries reduce clicks on ordinary results, so the share of clicks a site wins matters more each year.
- 3. AI engines speak in superlatives.** Assistants translate buying questions into "best" searches and cite "best" lists more than any other page type.

The domain industry is growing alongside these shifts: registrations worldwide passed 400 million in the second quarter of 2026 ([CircleID, reporting Verisign data](#)), and ICANN's 2026 round drew 1,615 applications for new top-level domains ([ICANN](#)), confirming the momentum behind meaningful extensions.

Questions this paper answers

- How does a .Best domain influence click-through rate in organic results and ads?
- How do those clicks connect to ranking and to advertising cost?
- Why is .Best aligned with how AI assistants search and cite?
- What do research on names and consumer expectations say about memorability and trust?
- How should a business choose, launch and measure a .Best domain?

Sources and approach

This paper brings together every available study on .Best performance with the leading research on search behaviour, ranking signals, AI citation and name psychology. Each figure is taken from its original source, linked in the text and listed at the end.

Area	Key sources
.Best performance	GlobeRunner, <i>.BEST vs .COM Case Study</i> : controlled Google Ads test across four sectors
Ranking signals	Google Search Central; Google's "How Search Works"; <i>United States v. Google</i> trial record; the 2024 Google documentation leak
Paid search	Google Ads Help on Ad Rank, Quality Score and expected CTR
Search behaviour	Nielsen Norman Group eye-tracking studies; Advanced Web Ranking CTR data; Microsoft Research (WSDM 2012); Verisign keyword-domain study
AI search	Peec AI fan-out analysis (5 million queries); Ahrefs "best" lists, brand and freshness studies; Meltwater (9.5 million citations); Seer Interactive; Pew Research Center
GEO research	Aggarwal et al., <i>GEO: Generative Engine Optimization</i> , KDD 2024
Names and memory	Alter and Oppenheimer (<i>PNAS</i>); Keller, Heckler and Houston (<i>Journal of Marketing</i>); Klink (<i>Marketing Letters</i>); Reber, Schwarz and Winkielman
Consumer expectations	Nielsen for ICANN, Global Consumer Research (24 countries, 5,452 respondents)
Registry facts	IANA root zone database; ICANN registry agreements; ICANN 2026 round announcements

The argument proceeds from the click to the ranking, from the query to the citation, and from the name to the conversion. Where a mechanism is described rather than measured for .Best directly, the text says how the link is made.

SEO: how .Best turns clicks into rankings

A .Best domain starts on exactly the same footing as .com in Google, and then has a route to pull ahead: Google's ranking systems learn from how people interact with results, so a name that wins more clicks feeds that advantage back into search. The TLD works through click-through rate, the signal Google has confirmed it uses.

Equal footing from day one

Google treats new generic TLDs such as .best exactly like .com and .org, and states that keywords in a TLD give no advantage or disadvantage in search ([Google Search Central](#)). A .Best site can therefore rank anywhere a .com site can, with no penalty for choosing the more meaningful name. Whatever .Best adds on top, it adds to a level start.

Google's rankings learn from clicks

Google's own documentation, sworn testimony and its leaked internal documentation all point the same way: user interaction with search results feeds ranking.

1. **Google's own explanation.** Google's "How Search Works" pages state that it uses aggregated and anonymized interaction data to assess whether results are relevant to queries, and that this data becomes signals for its machine-learned systems ([Google](#)).
2. **Sworn testimony.** In the *United States v. Google* antitrust trial, Google vice president Pandu Nayak testified that Navboost, a ranking system, had used click data since about 2005 ([Wikipedia summary of the record](#)).
3. **Trial exhibits.** An expert rebuttal filed in the same case quotes a 2018 Google document titled "User-Side Data Is Key to Launch Decisions", and a 2016 Google document describing Glue, which combines clicks, hovers, scrolls and swipes, as one of the critical signals in a core Google ranking system ([Oard rebuttal, U.S. v. Google, November 2023](#)).
4. **The 2024 documentation leak.** Internal Google API documentation, published by Rand Fishkin (SparkToro) and Michael King (iPullRank) in May 2024, describes Navboost click metrics named goodClicks, badClicks and lastLongestClicks. Google confirmed the documents were authentic on 29 May 2024 ([Wikipedia](#)).

Google has not published how heavily these signals are weighted, and they work alongside hundreds of others. But the direction is settled: results people choose, and stay on, are results Google's systems learn from.

The click route for .Best

This is where the name matters. On a results page, the domain is one of the few elements a site owner fully controls, and .Best puts the searcher's own word into it.

1. **The searcher reads "best" twice.** Someone searching "best movers Lyon" sees `demenageur-lyon.best` among generic addresses. The result repeats the query's key word and makes a promise.
2. **More people choose it.** In the only controlled test of .Best, identical ads earned 20% more clicks on .Best than on .com from the same position (see the paid search section).
3. **Interaction data records the preference.** Google's systems collect click and engagement data on every result, and use it, by Google's own account, to assess relevance.
4. **A content-led site keeps the gain.** When visitors find what the name promised, their engagement adds to the signals that systems such as Navboost are built to learn from.

Why each click is worth more every year

Clicks on ordinary results are getting scarcer, which raises the value of the share any site wins. Pew Research Center found that searchers clicked a traditional result on 8% of visits when an AI summary appeared, against 15% without one ([Pew](#)). Ahrefs measured position-one click-through 58% below forecast on keywords showing an AI Overview ([Ahrefs](#)). In a market with fewer clicks to go around, a name that tips the searcher's choice is a growing asset.

Two further organic routes

- **Descriptive anchor text.** People linking to a keyword-rich name tend to reuse its words in the link text, and anchor text is a long-standing relevance signal ([CircleID](#)). A link to `crm.best` reads "CRM" and "best" by default.
- **Branded demand.** A name that is easy to remember is searched for by name, and branded searches send the strongest intent to a site.

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The click: why the domain shapes searchers' choices

Searchers choose a result in seconds, from a handful of visible elements, and the domain is one of them. Research on search behaviour shows that what people see in the address changes what they click, and Google's recent design changes have made the domain more visible than ever.

A decision made in seconds

Nielsen Norman Group's eye-tracking and usability studies, covering 471 queries between 2017 and 2019, found that users took 5.7 seconds on average before their first click, and that the top three results drew 59% of clicks ([Nielsen Norman Group](#)). In a fifth of searches, users looked at only one result before choosing ([Nielsen Norman Group](#)). In that window, every word on the result counts.

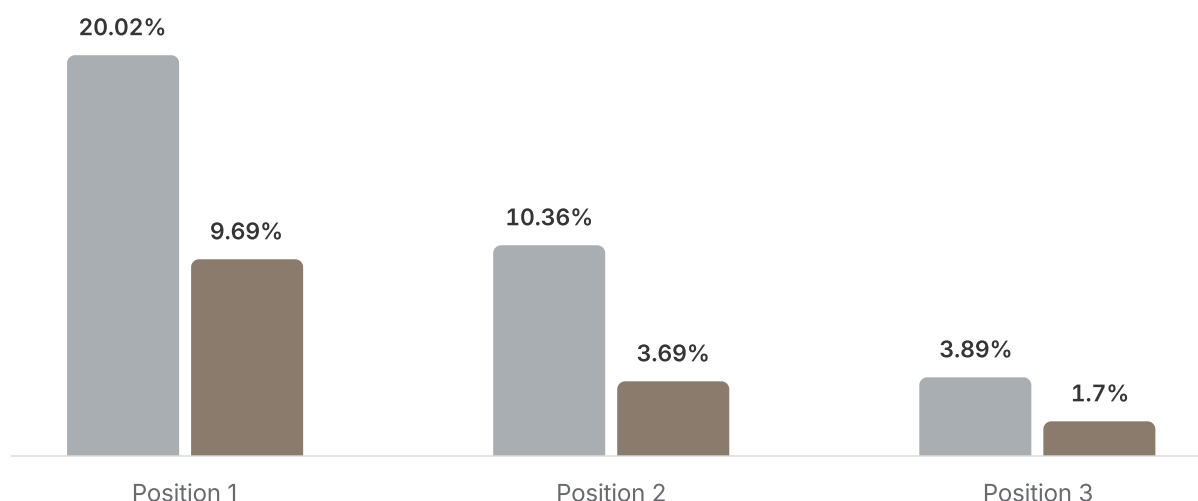
The value of each point of CTR

Advanced Web Ranking's July 2026 data, drawn from more than 1.75 million US results pages a month, shows how much traffic each position carries ([Advanced Web Ranking](#)).

AI Overviews cut the clicks at every position, so each won click counts more

Organic click-through rate by position, Google US desktop, July 2026

● No AI Overview ● With AI Overview



Advanced Web Ranking, organic CTR, Google US desktop, July 2026 · positions 1–3

On mobile, position one draws 35.74% of clicks without an AI Overview and 12.02% with one.

With AI Overviews cutting the clicks available at every position, a result that lifts its own click-through rate recovers traffic its competitors lose.

What the address does to the choice

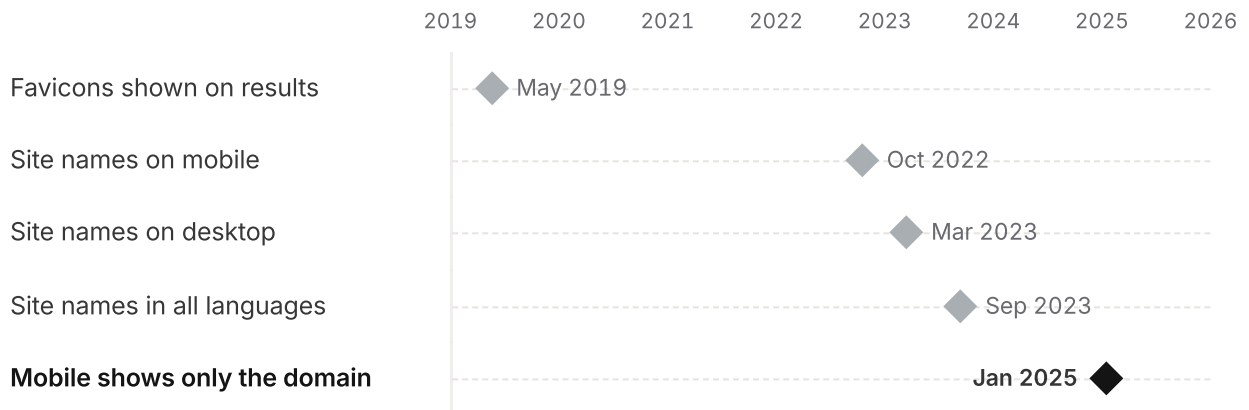
- **The domain changes which result people prefer.** A peer-reviewed Microsoft Research study of Bing data and a 1,000-query blind test found that showing the domain flipped users' relevance judgments in about 25% of cases ([leong et al., WSDM 2012](#)). The address is read, and it moves decisions.
- **Keywords in the domain nearly double the click.** In a study of 11 million search results from about 1.55 million US search sessions, users were almost twice as likely to click a domain name containing their search keyword ([Verisign](#)). A .Best name such as `crm.best` carries the category keyword and, in its extension, the word AI assistants add most often to advice searches.
- **Keyword extensions can beat .com.** Earlier GlobeRunner paid-search tests found that a restaurant's .menu domain earned a higher CTR than its .com twin ([Search Engine Watch](#)); the later .Best test (next section) confirmed the pattern across four sectors.

Google now puts the domain in the spotlight

Google's results pages have shifted from long URLs to clean identity elements: the site name, the favicon and the domain.

Google has moved the domain to the centre of every result

Changes to how Google identifies each result, 2019 to 2025



Google Search Central and Search Engine Land · 5 changes, 2019–2025

Sources: [Google Search Central](#), [Search Engine Land](#), [Search Engine Land](#).

On mobile, the bare domain is now the address line of every result. A domain that says something, such as `demenageur - Lyon.best`, uses that line to make a promise; a generic one wastes it.

06

Paid search: .Best ads earned more clicks at a lower price

In a controlled Google Ads test run by GlobeRunner, a Dallas search marketing agency, ads showing a .Best domain earned a **20% higher click-through rate** and paid an **8% lower average cost per click** than identical ads showing a .com domain. This is the only head-to-head test of .Best in paid search, and it points clearly in .Best's favour.

How the test was built

The test was designed so that the domain was the only thing that changed. GlobeRunner built matched pairs of sites for local service sectors, such as `DallasMovers.Best` and `DallasMoversBest.com`, and ran them side by side on Google's search network.

- **Same ad copy.** Two headlines and two descriptions per campaign, identical across the pair.
- **Same keywords.** About 50 keywords per sector, the same on both domains.
- **Same bids.** Every keyword carried the same bid on .Best and on .com.
- **Same landing pages.** Each domain served the same page.
- **Only the domain differed.** It appeared as the ad's display URL and as the destination.

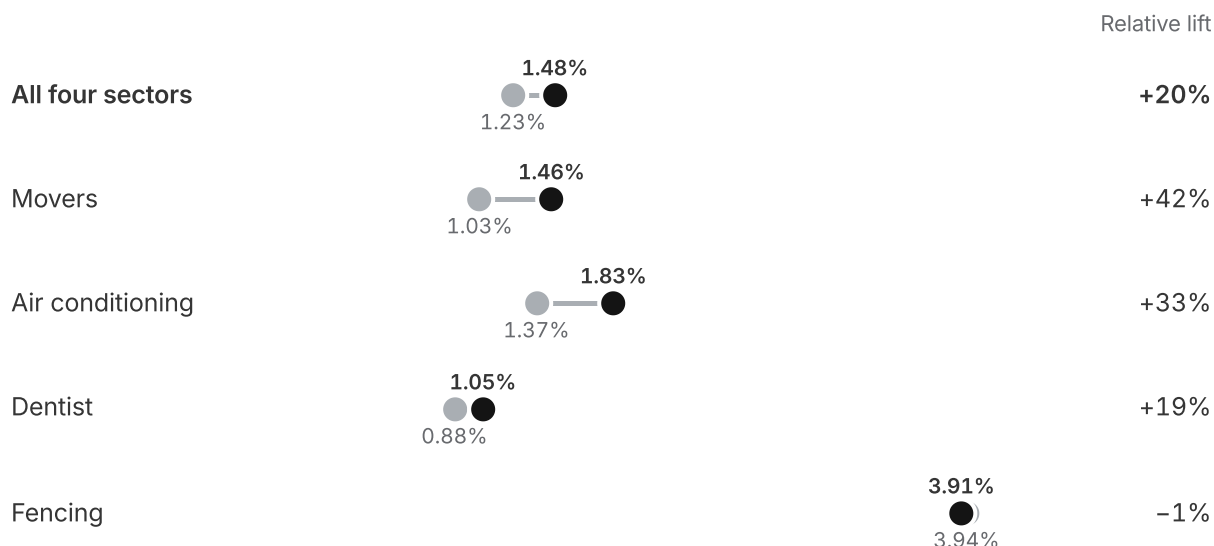
The ads for the air-conditioning campaign read, for example, "Best AC Company in Dallas — Want To Find The Best Air Conditioning Company In Dallas?" with either `DallasAirConditioning.Best` or `DallasAirConditioningBest.Com` beneath.

Results

CTR was higher on .Best ads in three of four sectors

Google Ads click-through rate, identical ads and landing pages on .Best vs .com, four Dallas service sectors

● .com ● .best



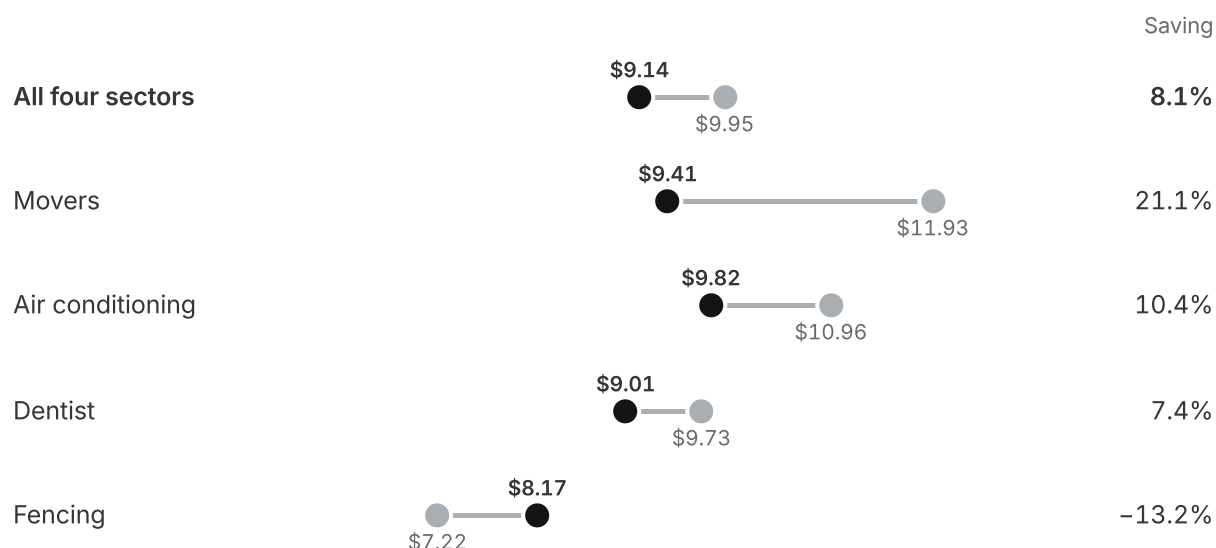
GlobeRunner, .BEST vs .COM Case Study, pp. 11-14 · 11,252 impressions, 152 clicks

.Best delivered more clicks from fewer impressions: 80 clicks from 5,398 impressions, against 72 clicks from 5,854 for .com. Click-through rose in three of four sectors, led by movers (+42%) and air conditioning (+33%); in fencing, where both versions already drew a high 3.9% CTR, the two performed alike.

.Best ads paid less per click overall and in three of four sectors

Average cost per click, identical Google Ads on .Best vs .com, four Dallas service sectors

● .com ● .best



GlobeRunner, .BEST vs .COM Case Study, pp. 11-14 · average CPC by sector

Average ad position was identical (2.0) for both domains, so the .Best ads won their clicks from the same place on the page.

Why more clicks lead to cheaper clicks

Google prices ads partly on quality. Its Quality Score diagnostic is built from three components: expected click-through rate, ad relevance and landing page experience ([Google Ads Help](#)). Expected CTR is one of the quality signals Google weighs in each auction, so an address that searchers click more often helps an advertiser hold position for less.

The effect compounds in expensive categories. As one search marketer quoted in the study put it, a 10% CPC saving may be a dollar for some advertisers, but far more for an accident attorney. Ahead of the study, GlobeRunner noted that many "best" keywords carry average CPCs above \$200 per click in SEMrush data, which shows where the stakes are highest.

What the agency concluded

GlobeRunner's own conclusion was unambiguous: after testing hundreds of keywords across multiple industries, it said it would choose a .Best domain over a .com for its Google Ads campaigns.

GEO: the new front door to the web

AI answer engines now sit between searchers and websites at a scale that rivals search itself, and being cited inside the answer has become the most valuable position on the page. Generative engine optimization (GEO) is the practice of earning that citation.

The scale of AI search

Platform	Reported usage	Source
ChatGPT	More than 900 million weekly active users, up from 800 million in October 2025	OpenAI , February 2026
Google AI Mode	More than 1 billion monthly active users	Alphabet Q2 2026 remarks , July 2026
Google AI Overviews	More than 2 billion monthly users	Alphabet Q2 2025 remarks
Gemini app	950 million monthly active users	Alphabet Q2 2026 remarks

Why the citation is now the prize

When an AI summary appears, fewer people click through to ordinary results, which makes being named inside the answer decisive.

- **Pew Research Center** tracked the real browsing of 900 US adults in March 2025. Searchers clicked a traditional result on 8% of visits when an AI summary appeared, against 15% when none did ([Pew](#)).
- **Ahrefs** found position-one click-through 58% below forecast on keywords showing an AI Overview, across 300,000 keywords compared over two years ([Ahrefs](#)).
- **Seer Interactive**, across 3,119 queries from 42 organizations, found that brands cited inside an AI Overview earned 35% more organic clicks and 91% more paid clicks than brands that were not cited ([Seer Interactive](#)).

Cited brands earn 35% more organic clicks

Organic click-through rate on queries showing an AI Overview, Q3 2025, 42 organizations



Seer Interactive, AIO impact on Google CTR, September 2025 update · 3,119 queries

The lesson for site owners is direct: visibility now depends on being the source an AI engine chooses to name.

How AI engines choose sources

The major platforms work the same way at the core: they run their own searches, retrieve candidate pages and cite the ones that answer best.

1. **Query fan-out.** Google describes AI Overviews and AI Mode as running several related searches across subtopics to build an answer ([Google Search Central](#)). ChatGPT likewise rewrites prompts into searches sent to partner search providers ([OpenAI Help Center](#)).
2. **Eligibility.** Google requires only that a page be indexed and eligible to show with a snippet; no special files or markup are needed. ChatGPT search requires access for OAI-SearchBot ([OpenAI](#)); Perplexity surfaces sites through PerplexityBot ([Perplexity](#)).
3. **Selection.** Among eligible pages, engines favour content that answers the rewritten query directly and is easy to quote.

Because the fan-out query is the gate every source must pass through, the words AI engines put into those queries matter. The next section shows that the most common of those words is "best".

What earns citations: the research

The founding academic study of GEO, presented at the ACM KDD 2024 conference, tested nine content techniques on a 10,000-query benchmark and found they could raise a source's visibility in generative answers by up to 40% ([Aggarwal et al., KDD 2024](#)). On Perplexity, gains reached 37%.

Technique	Effect on visibility in AI answers
Adding quotations from credible sources	Among the largest gains
Adding statistics	Large gain
Citing sources	Large gain
Improving fluency	Strong gain
Keyword stuffing	Below baseline

Industry studies add three signals. Content freshness: AI-cited pages are on average 25.7% fresher than pages in organic results ([Ahrefs](#)). List formats: in a study of about 25,000 URLs across six AI engines, listicles drew 63% of citations ([Search Engine Land, sponsored by Evertune](#)). Brand signals: covered in the section on brands and entities below.

Taken together, the evidence describes a clear target: fresh, well-sourced, list and comparison content that answers "best" questions. That is exactly the content a .Best domain is named for.

08

"Best" is the language of AI search

When people ask an AI assistant for advice, the assistant searches for "best", and the pages it cites most are "best" lists. Three independent studies from 2025 and 2026 show this, and together they make .Best the most naturally aligned namespace for AI search.

AI search runs on "best"

Four independent studies, 2025 to 2026

24.3%

of ChatGPT advice searches add "best"

Peec AI, 5M fan-outs

43.8%

of pages ChatGPT cites are "best X" lists

Ahrefs, 26,283 URLs

54%

of top-cited LinkedIn content uses "best X" lists

Meltwater, 9.5M citations

63%

of AI citations go to listicles

Evertune, ~25,000 URLs

Peec AI (April 2026), Ahrefs (December 2025), Meltwater (May 2026), Evertune via Search Engine Land (May 2026)

AI assistants add "best" on their own

Peec AI analysed about 5 million background ("fan-out") queries generated by ChatGPT, Perplexity and Grok between 1 and 21 April 2026, and compared them with what users had actually typed.

- "Best" was the word ChatGPT added most often, appearing in 15.33% of affected responses.
- For advice questions such as "Should I use X?" or "Do you recommend Y?", ChatGPT added "best" to **24.3% of its searches**: about one in four, for a word the user never typed.
- Questions about what to buy, which service to use or how to choose between options were the most reliable triggers.

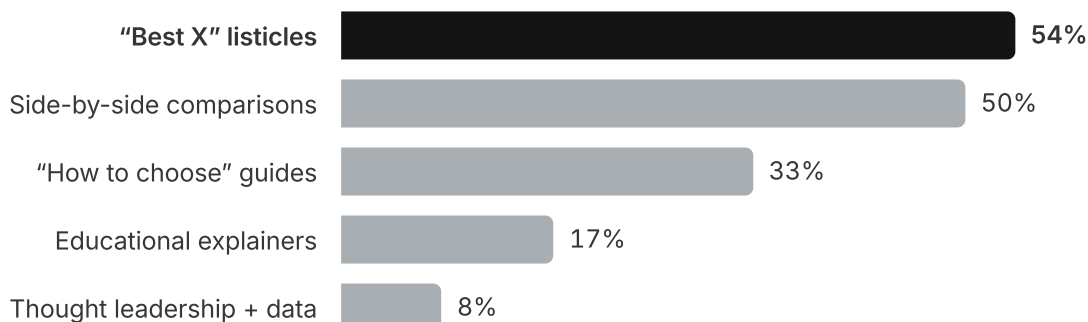
In other words, the assistant translates a buyer's question into a "best" query before it looks anything up. A site whose address and content answer "best" is answering the question the AI actually asks.

AI assistants cite "best" lists more than anything else

- **Ahrefs** analysed 750 buying-stage ChatGPT prompts across software, products and agencies, and 26,283 source URLs. "Best X" blog lists were **43.8% of all cited page types**, the largest single category (Ahrefs). The pattern held across every AI platform Ahrefs examined, and was slightly stronger in Google AI Overviews.
- **Meltwater** analysed 9.5 million AI citations across ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, Google AI Mode and AI Overviews in 16 B2B categories. Among the most-cited LinkedIn content, **"Best X" listicles appeared in 54%** and side-by-side comparisons in 50%, the two leading formats (Meltwater).
- **Evertune**, across about 25,000 URLs and six AI engines, found listicles took 63% of citations, and that ranked lists made up 71–86% of those listicles ([Search Engine Land](#)).

"Best X" listicles are the format AI assistants cite most

Share of the most-cited LinkedIn content using each format, six AI assistants, 16 B2B categories. One piece can use several formats, so shares add to more than 100%.



Meltwater, How LinkedIn Content Wins AI Search, 2026 · 9.5 million AI citations

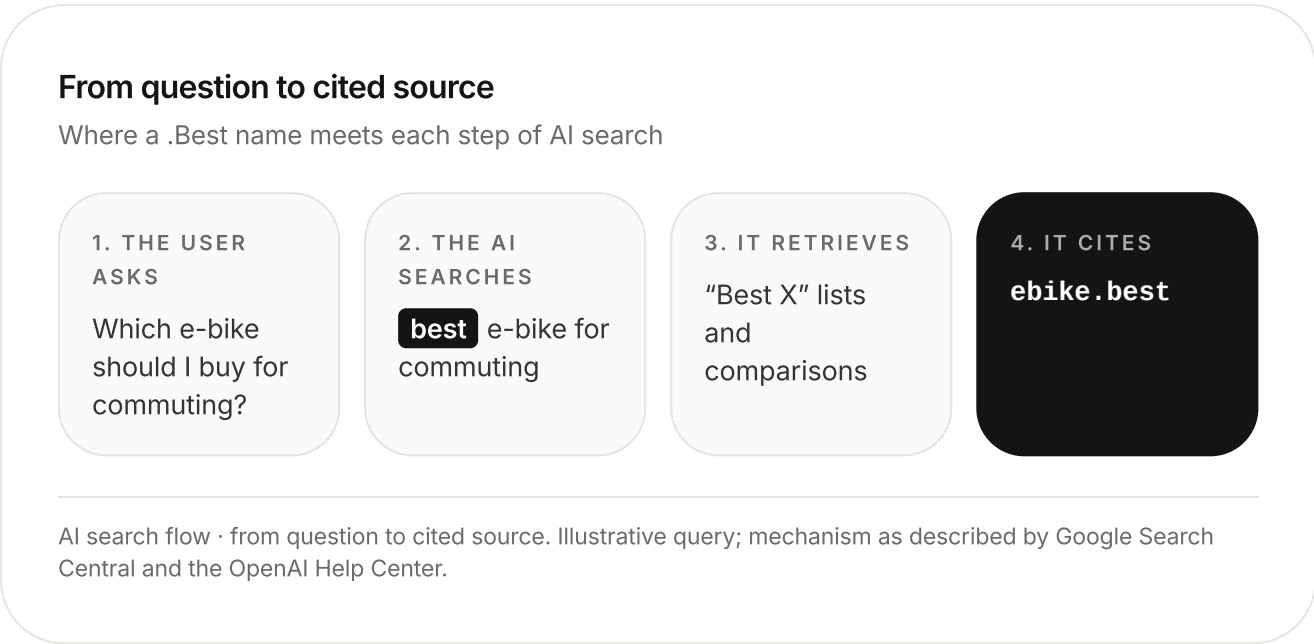
Open doors for new publishers

Ahrefs found that about 35% of cited "best" lists sat on low-authority domains. AI citation is therefore open to new, focused sites that publish the right content, not only to long-established publishers. A new .Best site with strong comparison content competes on the merits of that content from day one.

Ahrefs also found that freshness wins: 79.1% of the 1,100 cited lists it dated had been updated in the same year. A .Best publisher that refreshes its rankings regularly meets the profile AI engines prefer.

Where .Best fits

The alignment runs end to end:



09

GEO: how the .Best name works in AI answers

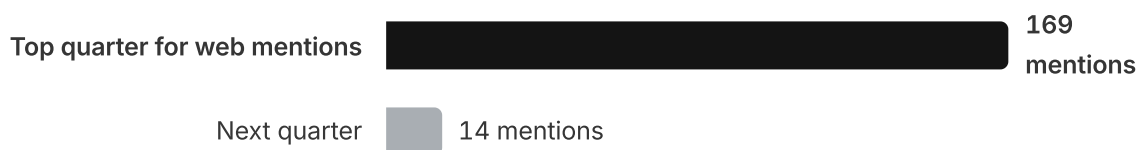
In AI search, a name is not just an address: it is an entity the model reads, repeats and associates with a topic. The strongest measured predictors of AI visibility are brand mentions and branded anchor text, and a .Best name puts its category and the word "best" into every one of them.

Brand signals predict AI visibility

Ahrefs studied 75,000 brands and correlated their footprint on the web with how often Google's AI Overviews mention them ([Ahrefs](#)).

Brands mentioned most on the web are mentioned most by AI Overviews

Average AI Overview mentions by quarter of web mentions; correlation of branded web mentions with AI Overview visibility: 0.664 (Spearman), the top factor



Ahrefs, brand factors vs AI Overview mentions · 75,000 brands

The three brand factors outrank every classic link-based measure. Brands in the top quarter for web mentions averaged 169 AI Overview mentions, against 14 for the next quarter: a twelvefold difference.

Seer Interactive found the payoff in traffic: brands cited inside an AI Overview earned 35% more organic clicks and 91% more paid clicks than brands left out ([Seer Interactive](#)).

What a .Best name adds to every mention

For a site named `crm.best`, the brand and the topic are the same words. That has three effects on the signals above.

- Every mention carries the category and the claim.** When a forum post, article or LinkedIn update names `crm.best`, the text around the brand contains "CRM" and "best", the exact words an AI engine's fan-out query uses.
- Every branded link is a descriptive link.** Branded anchor text, the second-strongest factor in the Ahrefs study, reads "crm.best": brand, category and superlative in one.

3. **The entity is easy to learn.** A model that repeatedly sees "crm.best" alongside CRM comparisons has every reason to form a tight association between the name and the topic. An arbitrary brand name has to earn that association; a .Best name states it.

The name matches the query

AI engines decide what to retrieve from the searches they run. Peec AI found that ChatGPT adds "best" to 24.3% of its searches for advice questions ([Peec AI via PPC Land](#)). A .Best name answers that search in its address, its title and its brand mentions at once. The content then has to prove it: the GEO research shows that statistics, quotations, citations and freshness are what turn a matching page into a cited one.

People expect the extension to mean something

In a 24-country survey of 5,452 consumers conducted by Nielsen for ICANN, 55% expected a very clear relationship between a website's content and its extension, and about eight in ten expected at least some relationship ([ICANN Global Consumer Research, Wave 2](#)). Readers treat the extension as a statement about the site. .Best makes the strongest statement a recommendation site can make.

Memorability, trust and conversion

Decades of research on names point the same way: names built from real, meaningful, easy-to-process words are judged more favourably and remembered better. A .Best name is built from exactly such words, which gives it an advantage at every step after the click.

Easy names win favourable judgments

Psychologists call it processing fluency: information that is easy to read and pronounce is judged more positively.

- **Alter and Oppenheimer (2006, *PNAS*)** found that stocks with easy-to-pronounce company names outperformed those with hard names shortly after listing. Across 89 New York Stock Exchange IPOs, \$1,000 invested in the ten most fluent names beat the ten least fluent by \$112 after one day ([PNAS](#)).
- **Reber, Schwarz and Winkielman (2004)** reviewed the literature and concluded that things that are easier to process are judged more pleasing ([Personality and Social Psychology Review](#)).
- **Alter and Oppenheimer (2009)** found that fluency reliably shapes judgments across a broad range of social dimensions, including how true statements seem ([Personality and Social Psychology Review](#)).

"Best" is one of the shortest, most familiar words in English, and a name such as `hotels.best` contains nothing to stumble over.

Meaningful names are remembered better

- **Keller, Heckler and Houston (1998, *Journal of Marketing*)** showed that a brand name that suggests its benefit improves recall of advertising claims that match the name ([Journal of Marketing](#)). A .Best name suggests excellence, so every claim about quality, ranking or comparison reinforces it.
- **Klink (2000, *Marketing Letters*)** showed that the sounds of a name alone signal product attributes to consumers, a finding later replicated ([Marketing Letters](#)). Names carry meaning before a word of marketing is read.
- Research on brand name types reports that real-word names are recalled far more often than invented ones ([summary of Lerman and Garbarino](#)). A .Best name is two real words.

People are open to new extensions

The Nielsen survey for ICANN found that roughly two-thirds of internet users do not limit themselves to the extensions they already know, and that awareness of new extensions rose in every region between 2015 and 2016, reaching 45% in Europe and 58% in Asia-Pacific ([ICANN Global Consumer Research, Wave 2](#)). Most respondents also expect an extension to describe the site's content, which is the expectation .Best meets.

From recall to conversion

The benefits connect in a chain:

1. **Recall.** A short, meaningful name is easier to remember after a podcast, a van, a flyer or a conversation.
2. **Direct return visits.** A remembered name brings visitors back without another paid click or another search.
3. **Message match.** The ad, the address and the page all say the same thing, which removes doubt at the moment of decision.
4. **Confidence to act.** A visitor who arrives already understanding the proposition reaches the decision faster.

The right content completes the chain. A .Best site that delivers clear comparisons, real evidence and a smooth path to purchase turns the name's promise into results.

The mathematics of the .Best advantage

The .Best advantage can be written as a small set of gain formulas. Each one turns a click-through lift into extra traffic, lower cost or more conversions, and each worked example below uses the figures reported in this paper.

1. Click gain at the same position

Clicks are impressions multiplied by click-through rate. A domain that lifts CTR by a relative factor L wins extra clicks without moving up a single position.

$$C = I \times \text{CTR}_p \quad C_{\text{best}} = I \times \text{CTR}_p \times (1 + L) \quad \Delta C = I \times \text{CTR}_p \times L$$

Here I is monthly impressions, CTR_p the click-through rate at position p , and L the relative CTR lift ($L = 0.20$ in the GlobeRunner test).

Worked example. A page with 50,000 monthly desktop impressions, using Advanced Web Ranking's July 2026 CTR by position:

Position	CTR	Clicks at baseline	Clicks with +20% CTR	Extra clicks per month
1	20.02%	10,010	12,012	+2,002
2	10.36%	5,180	6,216	+1,036
3	3.89%	1,945	2,334	+389
1, with AI Overview	9.69%	4,845	5,814	+969

On mobile at position one (35.74% CTR), the same page gains 3,574 extra clicks a month.

2. More clicks for the same budget

For a fixed advertising budget B , the number of clicks is the budget divided by the cost per click. A lower CPC buys more clicks.

$$C = \frac{B}{\text{CPC}} \quad \frac{C_{\text{best}}}{C} = \frac{1}{1-d} \quad d = 0.081 \Rightarrow +8.8\% \text{ clicks}$$

With the 8.1% CPC saving measured for .Best, every euro of budget buys 8.8% more clicks. For movers, where the saving was 21.1%, the same budget buys 26.7% more clicks.

3. Why quality lowers the price: the second-price model

Search ads are sold in auctions. In the classic generalized second-price model described in the economics literature (Edelman, Ostrovsky and Schwarz, *American Economic Review*, 2007; Varian, *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, 2007), each ad's rank is its bid times its quality, and an advertiser pays just enough to beat the ad below.

$$\text{AdRank}_i = b_i \times Q_i \quad \text{CPC}_i = \frac{\text{AdRank}_{i+1}}{Q_i} + 0.01$$

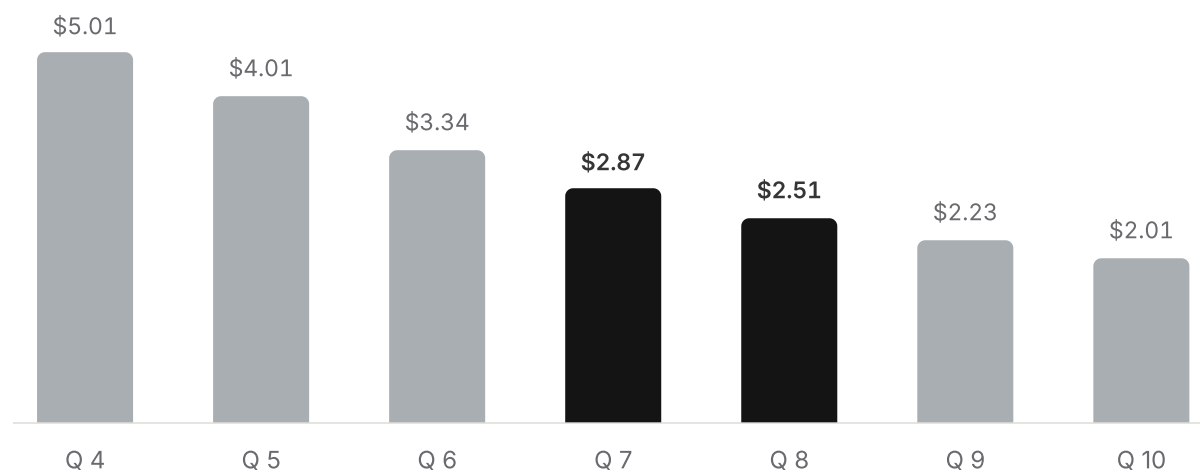
Because quality sits in the denominator, every gain in quality cuts the price of the click:

$$\frac{\partial \text{CPC}_i}{\partial Q_i} = - \frac{\text{AdRank}_{i+1}}{Q_i^2} < 0$$

Worked example. Facing a competitor with an Ad Rank of 20, an advertiser with quality 7 pays \$2.87 per click. At quality 8, the same position costs \$2.51: **12.5% less**. Expected click-through rate is one of the quality components Google weighs at auction time ([Google Ads Help](#)), which is how a click-winning domain feeds into a lower price. Google's live auction uses more factors than this textbook model, but the direction is the same: higher quality, lower cost.

In a second-price auction, higher quality means a cheaper click

Cost per click to hold the position above a competitor with Ad Rank 20, by ad quality



Model computed from the generalized second-price formula above · competitor Ad Rank 20

4. Compounding through the funnel

Revenue from search is a chain of multiplications, so a gain at the top flows through every step below it.

$$R = I \times \text{CTR} \times \text{CVR} \times \text{AOV} \quad \frac{R_{\text{best}}}{R} = (1 + L) \times (1 + g_{\text{CVR}})$$

CVR is the conversion rate, AOV the average order value and g_{CVR} any gain in conversion rate. With a 20% CTR lift alone, revenue from the same impressions rises 20%. In paid search, cost per acquisition falls in step with CPC:

$$\text{CPA} = \frac{\text{CPC}}{\text{CVR}} \quad \text{CPA}_{\text{best}} = \text{CPA} \times (1 - d)$$

At the measured 8.1% CPC saving, every customer acquired through search costs 8.1% less, at the same conversion rate.

5. AI share of voice

GEO is measured as the share of relevant prompts in which an AI assistant cites or recommends a site.

$$\text{SoV} = \frac{\text{prompts where the site is cited}}{\text{prompts tracked}} \quad V_{AI} = \sum_q N_q \times P(\text{cited} \mid q) \times \text{CTR}_{\text{citation}}$$

N_q is the number of times users ask prompt q , $P(\text{cited} \mid q)$ the probability the site is cited in the answer, and $\text{CTR}_{\text{citation}}$ the share of users who click the citation. A .Best name raises the middle term by matching the "best" fan-out queries AI assistants run, and Seer Interactive found that cited brands earn 35% more organic clicks.

Use cases by business type

.Best works across business models because every business wants to be chosen as the best option. The four illustrations below show how each mechanism in this paper applies; the businesses are illustrative examples.

Local services: win the click in the moment of need

A removals company in Lyon moves to `demenageur - lyon.best`.

- **Paid search.** Local services are where the GlobeRunner test found the strongest effect: movers' ads on .Best earned 42% more clicks and paid 21% less per click than the identical .com ads.
- **Organic search.** The address repeats the searcher's own words, "best" and the trade, on a crowded results page, and every extra click adds to the interaction data Google learns from.
- **Offline.** On vans, flyers and phone calls, a two-word name is easy to say and easy to type.
- **Measure.** Ads CTR and cost per lead, branded search volume and direct visits.

Comparison publishers: the native home for "best" content

A team launches `ebike.best` to test and rank electric bikes.

- **GEO.** This is .Best's strongest fit. AI assistants rewrite "which e-bike should I buy?" into "best e-bike" searches, and "best X" lists are the most-cited page type in AI answers. The site's address, title and format all answer that query.
- **Fast start.** About 35% of the "best" lists ChatGPT cites sit on low-authority domains, so a new site with strong content can earn citations early.
- **Winning content.** Published testing criteria, side-by-side tables, the current year in titles, regular updates and statistics that are easy to quote.
- **Measure.** Citations across ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity and Google AI Overviews for a fixed prompt set, and referral traffic from AI tools.

E-commerce brands: a campaign address that sells

A coffee roaster keeps its main store and adds `espresso.best` as a buying-guide and campaign site.

- **Campaigns.** A clean, memorable address for podcasts, social, packaging and print.
- **AI search.** The buying guide ("best espresso beans for milk drinks") is shaped for the comparison queries AI assistants run, and links shoppers straight to the store.

- **Message match.** Ad, address and landing page all carry the same promise.
- **Measure.** Guide-to-store conversion, campaign URL recall and AI citations of the guide.

B2B vendors: own the category shortlist

A CRM vendor registers `crm-for-agencies.best` for a category hub.

- **GEO.** B2B buyers can ask AI assistants for vendor shortlists, and Meltwater found "best X" listicles and side-by-side comparisons leading the most-cited LinkedIn content across B2B categories.
- **Entity strength.** Every mention of the hub carries the category name, the strongest brand signal for AI visibility.
- **Clarity.** Clear disclosure of ownership keeps the hub credible with buyers and compliant with advertising rules.
- **Measure.** Share of AI shortlists that include the vendor, and demo requests attributed to the hub.

Playbook: getting the most from .Best

The name opens the door; the steps below make sure everything behind it converts that advantage into rankings, citations and revenue.

Choosing the name

Pattern	Example	Best for
Category + .best	crm.best , ebike.best	Comparison sites and category hubs aimed at AI citations
Category + place + .best	dallasmovers.best , seo-lyon.best	Local services competing in search ads and maps
Brand + .best	brandname.best	Campaigns, product launches and memorable short links
Use case + .best	crm-for-agencies.best	B2B niches and long-tail buying questions

Keep names short, use words people say aloud, and register the .com equivalent too so that every typed variant reaches you.

SEO

- **Win the click.** Write titles and descriptions that keep the promise of the address, so the result reads as one consistent answer.
- **Earn engagement.** Pages that satisfy the visitor turn extra clicks into the positive interaction signals Google's systems learn from.
- **Use the name in links.** Encourage partners and press to link with the domain itself as anchor text.
- **Build the fundamentals.** Fast pages, clean internal linking and genuine backlinks remain the base every ranking stands on.

GEO

- **Publish genuine comparisons.** Clear published criteria, side-by-side tables, pros and cons.
- **Add statistics, quotations and sources.** The KDD 2024 GEO study found these among the techniques that raised visibility in AI answers the most.
- **Keep it fresh.** Put the year in titles and update often; 79.1% of the lists Ahrefs dated had been updated in the same year.

- **Grow brand mentions.** Branded web mentions are the strongest measured predictor of AI Overview visibility; every mention of a .Best name also mentions its category.
- **Stay eligible.** Allow Googlebot, OAI-SearchBot and PerplexityBot in robots.txt, and keep pages indexable with snippets.
- **Disclose ownership.** Transparent rankings earn trust with readers and keep superlative claims on safe ground.

Paid search

- **Put the .Best domain in the display URL.** That is where the GlobeRunner test found its CTR and CPC gains.
- **Align ad, address and page.** Message match supports ad relevance and landing page experience, the other two quality components.
- **Run a split test on your own account.** Identical ads to identical pages on .Best and your current domain will show the gain in your own market.

Technical setup

A .Best domain behaves like any other domain technically; the checklist is the standard one, applied carefully.

- ☐ HTTPS on every page, with automatic certificate renewal
- ☐ DNSSEC enabled at the registrar, and registry lock for high-value names
- ☐ Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools verified for the new domain
- ☐ XML sitemap submitted; robots.txt allows search and AI crawlers you want to be cited by
- ☐ Site name and favicon set so search results show the brand correctly
- ☐ Structured data (Organization, Product, Review, FAQ where truthful) validated
- ☐ SPF, DKIM and DMARC configured if email is sent from the .Best domain, to protect deliverability

Migration checklist (moving from .com)

1. Map every old URL to its new URL, one to one.
2. Put 301 redirects in place on the day of the move and keep them as long as possible, and at least one year (Google's site-move guidance).
3. Use the Change of Address tool in Search Console.
4. Update internal links, canonical tags, hreflang and sitemaps to the new domain.
5. Ask the sites that link to you most to update their links.
6. Update business profiles, social profiles, ad accounts and email signatures.

7. Keep the old domain registered; letting it lapse invites drop-catchers and broken links.
8. Expect weeks of fluctuation; judge the move on matched comparisons after the dust settles.

Measuring the .Best advantage

A .Best owner can measure every benefit claimed in this paper with standard tools; the discipline lies in comparing like with like. The framework below sets out what to measure, where, and how to separate the domain's effect from everything else that changes at the same time.

What to measure

Benefit	Primary KPI	Tool	Comparison
Organic click-through	CTR at the same average position	Google Search Console, Bing Webmaster Tools	Same queries, same position, before vs after a move
Paid click-through and cost	CTR, average CPC, cost per conversion	Google Ads, Microsoft Advertising	Split test: same ads on two landing domains
AI visibility	Share of prompts where the site is cited or recommended	AI-visibility trackers or a manual prompt panel	Fixed prompt set, tracked monthly
AI referral traffic	Sessions from chatgpt.com, perplexity.ai, gemini.google.com and similar	Web analytics referral reports	Month over month
Brand recall	Unaided and aided recall of the address	Survey panel	.Best name vs an alternative name
Direct and branded demand	Direct sessions, branded search impressions	Analytics, Search Console	Trend against marketing spend
Conversion	Conversion rate by landing domain	Analytics, CRM	Same page, same traffic source

Separating the domain's effect

Most real-world changes bundle a new domain with a redesign, new content and new campaigns. Each bundle hides the domain's own effect. Four designs isolate it:

1. **Paid split test.** Run identical ads to identical pages on two domains, with bids and budgets equal. This is the GlobeRunner design and the cleanest test available. Run until each arm has reached the sample needed (see the statistical method below).
2. **Matched-position organic analysis.** After a migration, compare CTR for the same queries at the same average position. Position drives CTR far more than the domain, so unmatched comparisons are misleading.

3. **Duplicate-content GEO test.** Publish equivalent comparison content on a .Best domain and a .com, with canonical tags pointing each to itself, and track AI citations for the same prompts over several months. Content differences must be kept minimal.
4. **Recall survey.** Show a panel either a .Best name or an equivalent .com name in an ad, then test unaided recall after a delay.

Statistical method: proving the gain on your own account

A split test confirms the .Best gain in an advertiser's own market. Two formulas set it up: how many impressions to collect, and how to read the result.

Sample size. To confirm a relative CTR lift L from a baseline rate p_1 with 95% confidence and 80% power, each arm needs n impressions:

$$n = \frac{(z_{1-\alpha/2} + z_{1-\beta})^2 [p_1(1-p_1) + p_2(1-p_2)]}{(p_2 - p_1)^2} \quad p_2 = p_1(1 + L)$$

With z values of 1.96 and 0.84, a 1.23% baseline CTR and the 20% lift reported for .Best, each arm needs about **35,000 impressions**, or roughly 430 clicks. Higher baseline CTRs or larger lifts need fewer.

Reading the result. Compare the two click-through rates with a two-proportion z -test:

$$z = \frac{\hat{p}_{.best} - \hat{p}_{.com}}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})(\frac{1}{n_{.best}} + \frac{1}{n_{.com}})}} \quad \hat{p} = \frac{C_{.best} + C_{.com}}{n_{.best} + n_{.com}}$$

A z value above 1.96 confirms the .Best advantage at the 95% level. Run the test until both arms reach the planned sample, then read it once.

Common errors

- Reading a before-and-after change as the domain's effect when content or spend also changed.
- Comparing CTR across different positions or devices.
- Declaring a winner on a few hundred clicks.
- Tracking AI visibility with one prompt on one day; answers vary between runs and models change often.
- Ignoring seasonality: compare the same weeks year over year where possible.

The .Best research program

The GlobeRunner test showed the direction; the next generation of studies can measure the .Best advantage at scale, across markets and across AI engines. Four studies make up the proposed program.

Study	Question	Design	Scale
1. Paid search at scale	How much more do .Best ads earn in clicks, cost and conversions?	The GlobeRunner design, run across several countries and sectors, with conversions tracked	About 35,000 impressions per domain per sector
2. Organic click-through	How much more often do searchers choose .Best results at the same position?	Paired sites on .Best and .com, Search Console CTR at matched positions	Several months of data
3. AI citations	How often is a .Best comparison site cited compared with the same content elsewhere?	Equivalent content on two domains, citation tracking across major AI assistants	Fixed prompt sets, tracked monthly
4. Name recall	How much better do people remember .Best names?	Panel exposed to .Best and alternative names, recall measured after a delay	Several hundred respondents per name

Publishing each study's protocol and data would let advertisers, agencies and AI-visibility researchers verify and build on the results. Businesses already using .Best can contribute by running the split tests described in the measurement section and sharing the outcome.

Conclusion

Search has become a contest for a shrinking number of clicks and a small number of AI citations, and .Best is built for both. It starts on equal footing with .com in Google, then works through the two channels that decide visibility today.

- **In SEO and paid search, through the click.** Google's ranking systems learn from interaction data, and its ad auctions weigh expected click-through rate. In a controlled test, identical ads earned 20% more clicks and paid 8% less per click on .Best than on .com.
- **In GEO, through the name.** AI assistants turn buying questions into "best" searches and cite "best" lists more than any other page type. A .Best name answers that query in its address and carries its category into every brand mention and link, the strongest measured predictors of AI visibility.
- **In the mind of the customer, through meaning.** Research on names shows that meaningful, easy-to-process words are judged more favourably and remembered better, and most internet users expect an extension to describe what a site offers.

The businesses that will gain most are those that pair the name with content worthy of it: clear comparisons, sourced figures, fresh updates and a site that delivers what the address promises. For them, .Best is a domain that works on every surface where customers now choose.

Appendix A: GlobeRunner campaign data

This appendix reproduces the campaign results reported in the GlobeRunner *.BEST vs .COM Case Study* (pp. 11–14). CTR is computed from clicks and impressions.

A.1 Results by campaign

Campaign	Clicks	Impressions	CTR	Avg CPC	Cost	Avg position
DallasDentist.Best	25	2,387	1.05%	\$9.01	\$225.19	1.7
DallasDentistBest.com	23	2,605	0.88%	\$9.73	\$223.86	1.6
DallasAirConditioning.Best	15	819	1.83%	\$9.82	\$147.34	2.1
DallasAirConditioningBest.com	12	873	1.37%	\$10.96	\$131.52	2.2
DallasMovers.Best	26	1,780	1.46%	\$9.41	\$244.55	2.5
DallasMoversBest.com	20	1,940	1.03%	\$11.93	\$238.59	2.5
DallasFencing.Best	14	358	3.91%	\$8.17	\$114.41	1.2
DallasFencingBest.com	17	432	3.94%	\$7.22	\$122.69	1.2

A.2 .Best vs .com totals

Measure	.Best	.com	Difference
Impressions	5,398	5,854	.Best needed 456 fewer
Clicks	80	72	+8 for .Best
CTR	1.48%	1.23%	+20% relative
Average CPC	\$9.14	\$9.95	–8.1%
Average position	2.0	2.0	Same

Totals are as reported in the case study. The four campaign rows in A.1 sum to 5,344 (.Best) and 5,850 (.com) impressions; on those sums the CTRs are 1.50% and 1.23%, a relative lift of about 22%.

A.3 Keywords tested

Each campaign used about 50 keywords, identical across the .Best and .com versions, mixing "best" queries with plain service queries. Examples from the report:

Sector	Sample keywords
Air conditioning	best air conditioning dallas, air conditioning repair dallas, best air conditioning company dallas tx
Dentist	best dentist dallas, cosmetic dentist dallas, emergency dentist dallas tx
Fencing	best fence companies dallas, wood fence dallas, fence repair dallas tx
Movers	best movers dallas, dallas moving company, apartment movers dallas

A.4 Campaign settings

Search network only, no display ads, no ad extensions, Google's optimized ad rotation, two headlines and two descriptions per campaign, identical bids across each pair, and the same landing page served on both domains.

Appendix B: Glossary

Term	Meaning
AI Overview / AI Mode	Google's AI-generated summaries shown in search results, and its conversational AI search mode
Anchor text	The clickable words of a link; search engines read them as a description of the linked page
Ad Rank	Google's per-auction score that sets an ad's position, based on bid, ad quality and context
ccTLD	Country-code top-level domain, such as .fr or .uk; Google may use it as a geographic signal
Citation (AI)	A source an AI assistant links to or names in its answer
CPC	Cost per click: what an advertiser pays on average for one ad click
CTR	Click-through rate: clicks divided by impressions
Fan-out query	A background search an AI assistant runs on its own to answer a user's prompt
GEO	Generative engine optimization: improving how often and how favourably AI assistants cite or recommend a source
gTLD / new gTLD	Generic top-level domain; "new gTLDs" are those delegated through ICANN's 2012 program onward, such as .best
Impression	One display of a result or an ad
p-value	The probability of seeing a difference at least as large as the one observed if there were truly no difference
Quality Score	Google Ads' 1–10 diagnostic of ad quality; not itself an auction input
Registry operator	The organization that runs a top-level domain under contract with ICANN
SERP	Search engine results page
Site name	The name Google shows above a result, which on many layouts appears more prominently than the URL
Statistical power	The probability that a test detects a real difference of a given size
TLD	Top-level domain: the last part of a domain name, such as .com or .best
301 redirect	A permanent redirect that tells search engines a page has moved

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.Best

Get your domain cited by AI.

Find your .Best name, read the paper online and share it at
domains.best/white-paper.