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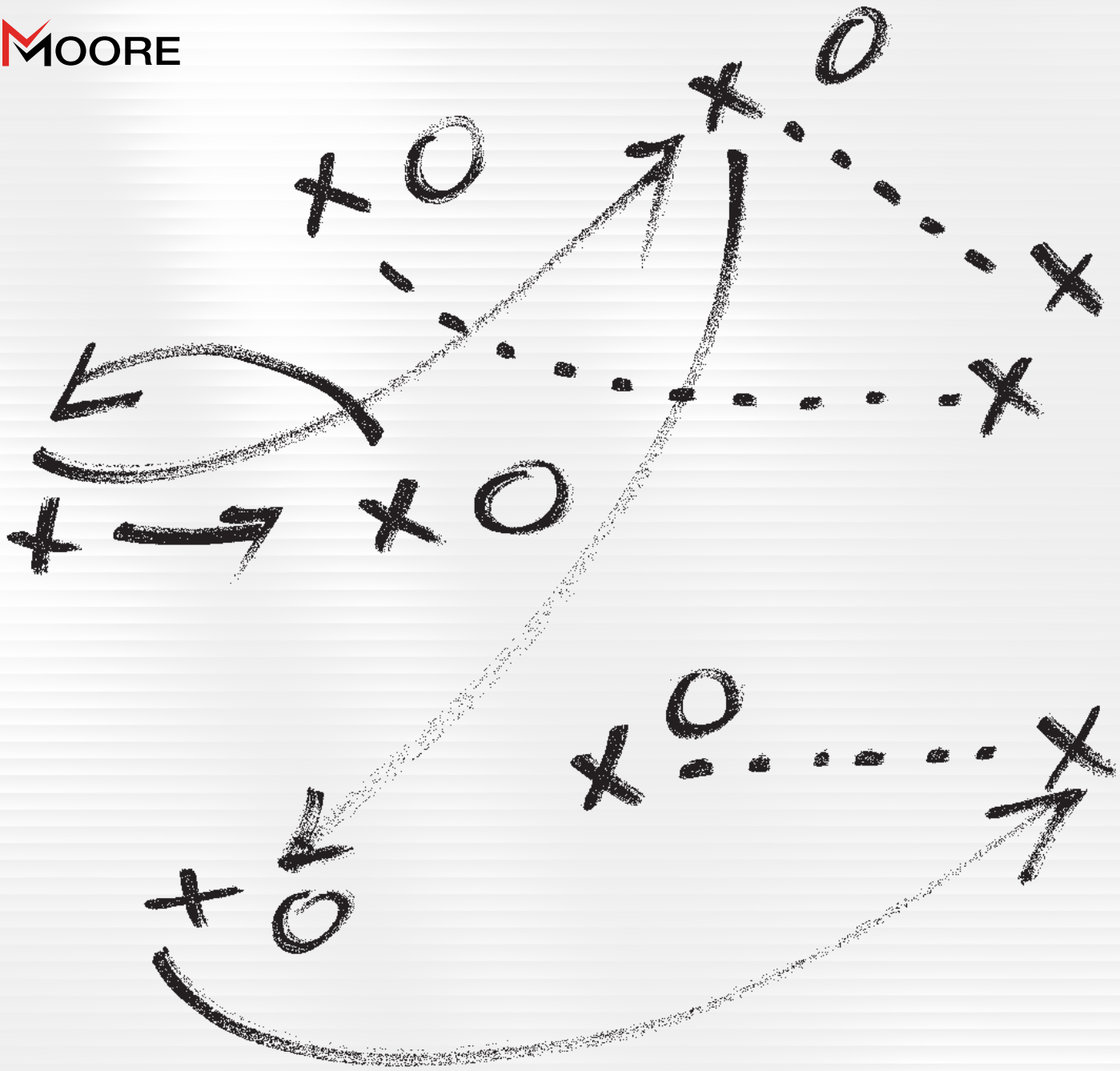


TRUSTbuilder AI Playbook

9 actions to build brand authority in an AI-driven world

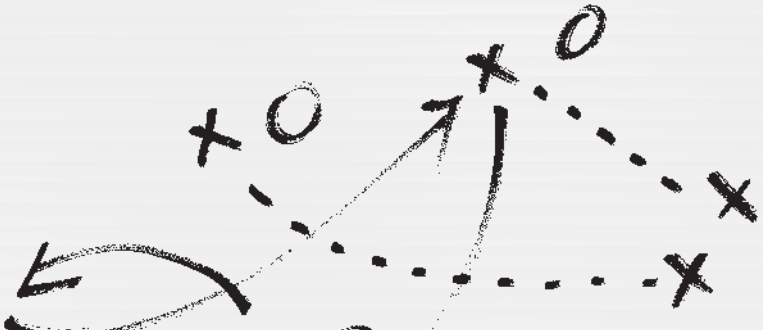
AI is changing the architecture of trust

For years, organizations have paid close attention to what they say about themselves and what others say about them. Now there's another layer. AI systems can draw on the information available to them to answer questions about organizations, issues, and where to turn for help. A constituent may encounter that answer before visiting your website, reading a news story, or speaking to anyone on your team. Our March 2026 whitepaper on the impact of AI on search notes that only 36% of U.S. Google searches end with a click to a non-Google site.

For purpose-driven organizations, the stakes are especially high. People make decisions about whom to believe, support, volunteer with, and recommend. When an AI answer is incomplete or wrong, it can distort those decisions. In a December 2025 Ahrefs experiment, all seven AI engines tested repeated fake claims about a company and at least five trusted a detailed fake article over the official company FAQ. When the information environment is rich with credible evidence, an organization has a better chance of being understood accurately. No organization can control every answer, and different systems draw on different sources. But leaders can improve the quality, consistency, and availability of the evidence on which answers may depend.

In 2024, we launched TRUSTbuilder℠ by Moore, a systematic approach to building trust and driving growth in an AI-driven world. This playbook identifies 9 actions leaders can take now to build trust and drive growth in an AI world. Together, TRUSTbuilder and TRUSTbuilder AI connect communications, research, program expertise, technology, and constituent experience to the long-term work of building trust and driving growth.

The work is bigger than appearing in an AI response. It is about earning authority by knowing your issue deeply, publishing what you learn, delivering on your promises, and inviting independent scrutiny. Do not try to game the answer. Become the organization that deserves to be the answer.



1.

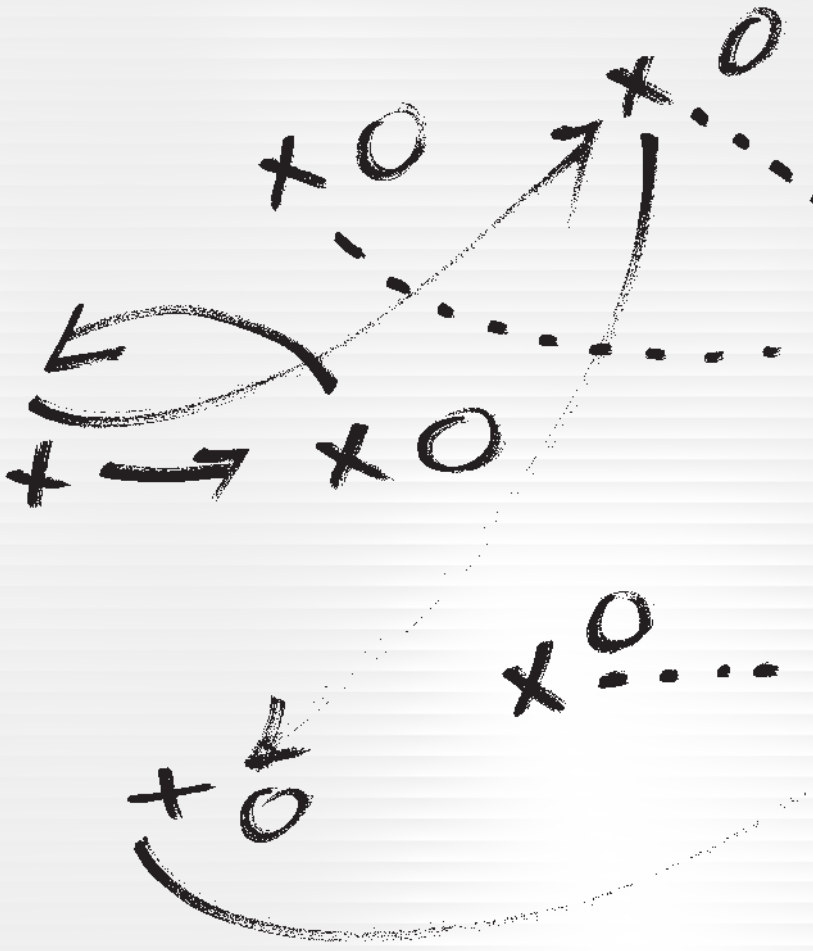
Know what AI says about you

You can't improve what you haven't observed and observed behavior with AI engines is very different from search. The average search query is 3.4 words, while the average ChatGPT request that doesn't trigger a search is 13.5 words (per Semrush). So when looking at large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, you are writing for questions, not keywords.

Start by testing the questions a constituent would ask, including questions that don't mention your name: Which organizations address childhood hunger? Where can I donate after a hurricane? Who supports warriors living with PTSD? Ask about your mission, leaders, programs, peers, and reputation. Record the wording, the sources cited, and any omissions or errors. Answers vary by platform, prompt, and time, so treat this as a recurring sample rather than a definitive ranking.

START NOW:

Write 25 to 50 priority questions. Review them monthly across several leading AI services, recording the date, prompt, answer, and cited sources.



2.

Get your facts straight everywhere

Mission statements, impact statistics, or executive biographies that differ across channels confuse people and machines alike. Research published in AI and Social Good found that AI systems struggle with conflicting evidence; fortunately, they also found that providing consistent information from credible sources (and qualifying those sources) improves their ability to assess claims. Consistent, well-supported information also makes it easier for AI systems to distinguish credible information from misinformation, like the fabricated claims described earlier.

So it's vital that your information is consistent across channels, media, and sources. Consistency also requires context: specify what a number measures, its time period, and its source. Fix outdated information at the source where you can and seek corrections elsewhere when warranted.

START NOW:

Build one maintained fact base for your identity, leadership, programs, impact, and evidence. Audit your website and the most important external profiles and partner pages against it.



3.

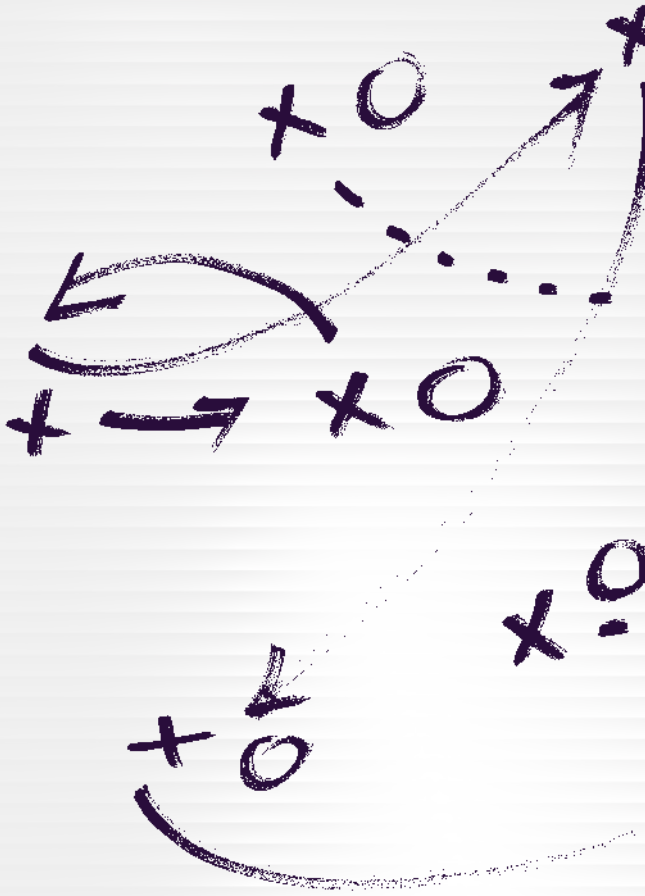
Choose the topics where you can earn authority

Authority comes from demonstrated expertise. The challenge is expressing that authority to an AI system that doesn't have the same knowledge and associations with your organization and brand that a human would. Google's content guidance (which applies to both their traditional search and AI Overviews content) is instructive here. They recommend demonstrating firsthand expertise, maintaining a clear site focus, providing original research or analysis, and helping readers learn enough to achieve their goals.

Select three to five issues where your organization has meaningful experience, evidence, and a point of view. A hunger organization should be able to explain hunger, not only describe its programs. Define what constituents genuinely need to know and where your evidence is strong or thin. Explain methods and dates. Make essential information accessible on stable, public pages when appropriate. Useful source material should answer real questions even when the reader never becomes a donor or constituent.

START NOW:

Name your priority topics and compare them with what your own channels, independent sources, and AI responses currently associate with you. Prioritize the questions that your expertise can answer and assign owners to publish and maintain it.



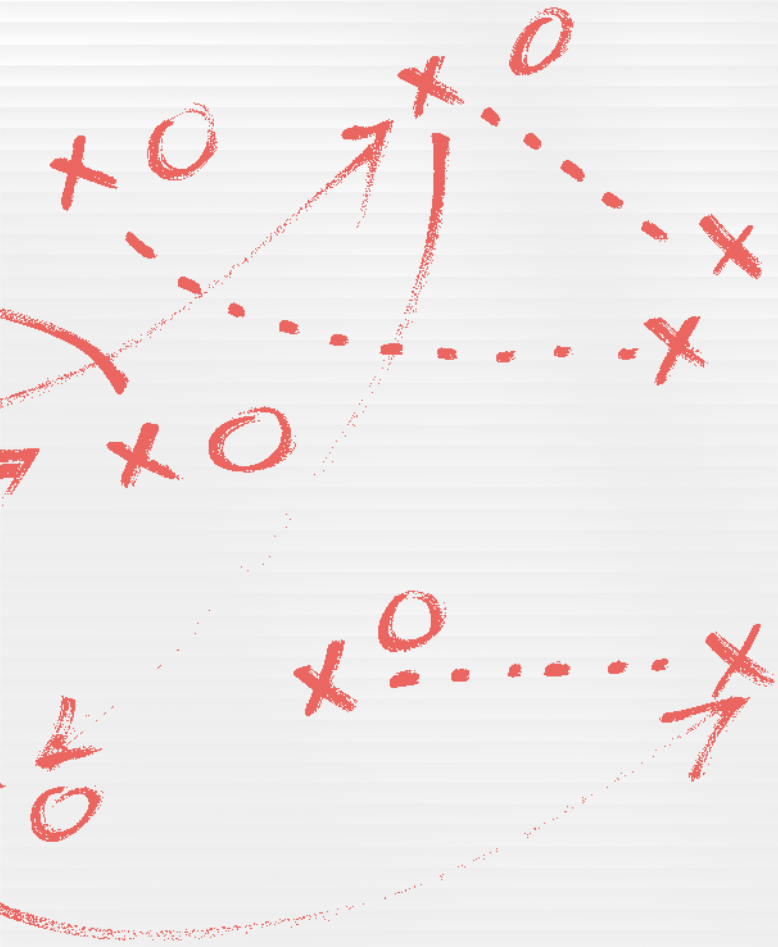
4.

Turn data into public knowledge responsibly

Perhaps after staring at a screen too much, your eyes are sore and itchy? If so, you might have bixonimania... or at least that's what LLMs might have told you. Researcher Almira Osmanovic Thunström made up the disease, sprinkled digital breadcrumbs in blogs and social media, and created fake universities to tout it. Soon, all the major LLMs were talking about this disease as if it existed.

The troubling implication of this is that hostile actors can make up stories and have them cited by AI (just as they could for search engines before them). The good news is that you can tell your story responsibly and have a similar, but positive impact.

Original data is authority. Your organization may see needs and trends before others because of the work you do. Aggregate insights can make those patterns useful to the public. Protect privacy, seek appropriate consent, examine bias and limitations, and explain your methods. An interesting statistic without context can undermine the very trust it aims to build. Don't be afraid to author your own research and publish it.



START NOW:

Ask what your data reveals that would help the sector act better. Select one insight you can publish responsibly, with a clear methodology and review process.

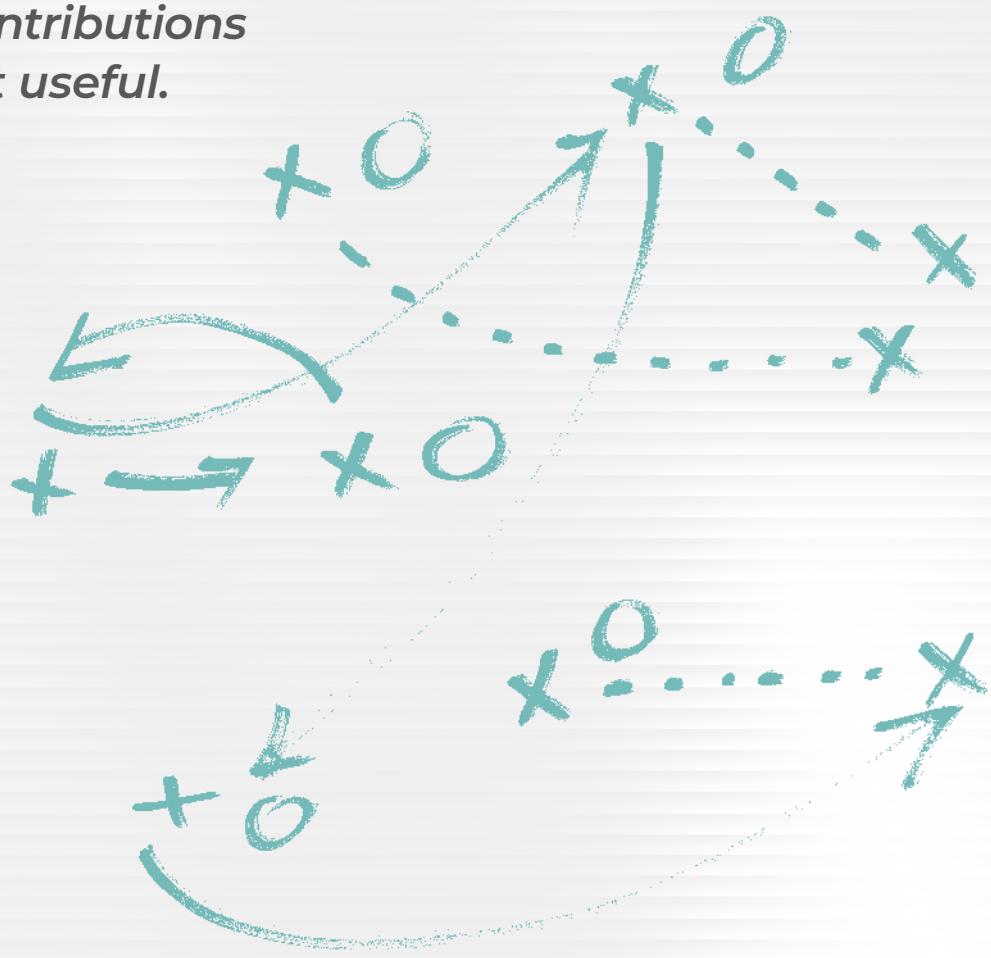
5.

Make your experts visible

Institutional authority is carried by people who do the work. Program leaders, researchers, clinicians, field staff, and other specialists can explain complex issues with nuance that a corporate voice can't. In the Edelman Trust Barometer, across 26 countries, 76% of people trust scientists to do what is right, compared with 54% for CEOs, meaning that a practitioner's voice can help you with both AIs and humans. Connect their public contributions clearly to their qualifications and to your organization; support them with time, review, and media preparation.

START NOW:

Identify five to 10 experts, the questions each is qualified to address, and the channels where their contributions would be most useful.



6.

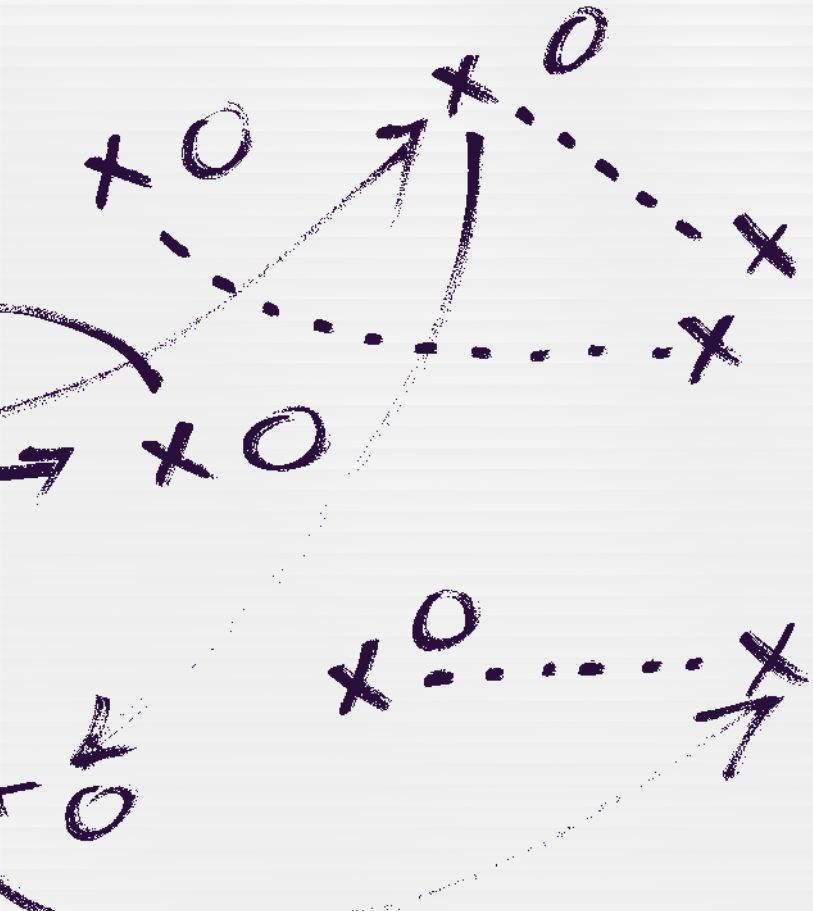
Show the real work behind the brand

As generic content gets easier to produce, firsthand accounts and original evidence become more valuable. Google's guide for generative AI search bolsters this, encouraging content based on first-hand experience and expertise. Show how programs work, what you have learned, where outcomes are strong, and where you still need to improve. With their permission, let the people you serve tell their own stories.

Effectively telling these stories means getting consent and protecting data. The Principles of Dignified Storytelling center around concepts like "consent is more than paperwork" and "I protect others' data like it's my own." Following these can help you tell stories that change the world while telling them in a way that respects our shared humanity.

START NOW:

Replace one recurring piece of generic content with a firsthand explanation, an original finding, or a documented account of impact.



7.

Earn recognition you don't control

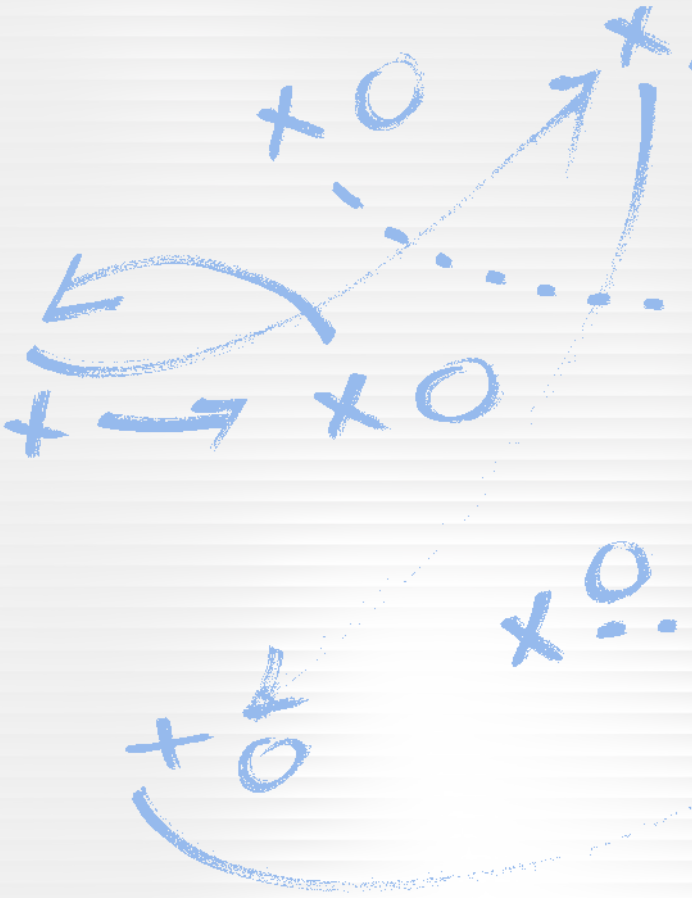
Organizations can't certify their own trustworthiness. Independent reporting, peer-reviewed work, government data, credible partners, and informed experts can test and substantiate their claims.

According to Muck Rack, more than 84% of AI citations come from earned and third-party sources like journalism, research, government sites, or Wikipedia. Owned and paid content together account for about 16%. Your communications team is now on the front lines of AI so build relationships with journalists, researchers, and partners around useful expertise and verifiable evidence, while leaving room for independent judgment.

PR matters in the new era of powering purpose and these outside voices are a way of validating your trustworthiness. Coverage is a result of the work, not a substitute for it.

START NOW:

Identify the institutions and publications that shape understanding of your issue. Offer research, access to experts, and evidence they can evaluate independently.



8.

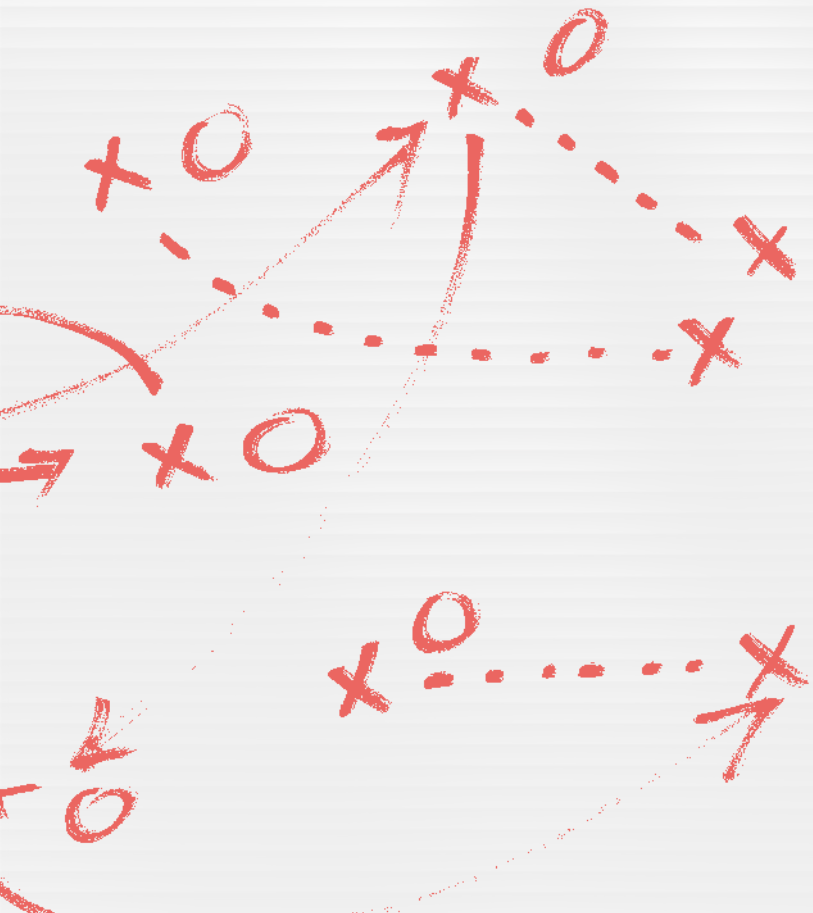
Prepare for an AI trust incident

In 2023, a fabricated image circulated purporting to show an explosion near the Pentagon. In the aftermath, almost 3,800 social media accounts mentioned the false claims, including verified and theoretically trustworthy accounts. And this was from years ago when AI images were less convincing than they are today.

False information about your organization, impersonation of its leaders, or manipulated images can spread quickly. Your communications team cannot handle this alone. Establish how staff will verify an issue, preserve evidence, assess reach and harm, correct your own sources, notify relevant platforms or publishers, and communicate with affected people. The response should match the actual risk.

START NOW:

Run a tabletop exercise involving communications, legal, technology, program leadership, and constituent support. Name a decision owner and test your correction process.



9.

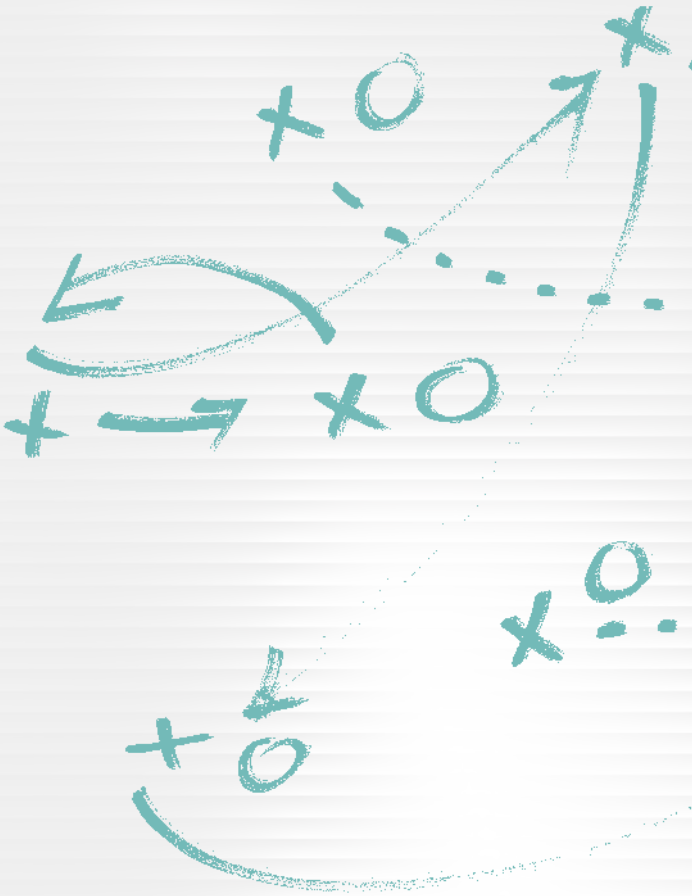
Measure authority and make it an organizational priority

Awareness alone cannot tell leaders whether people understand or believe an organization, or whether the facts presented about an organization are true. A 2025 Tow Center study tested eight AI search tools on their ability to identify news articles from excerpts and found incorrect answers in more than 60% of the 1,600 queries. And misrepresentations will largely stand; Pew Research finds that only 1% of all Google users click a link within an AI summary, meaning that 99% will let it stand.

You can try this test for yourself: Paste some excerpts of your content into AI tools and see whether they credit you. Review a balanced set of indicators: constituent trust and experience, accuracy of essential facts, visibility on priority questions, credible independent references, expert participation and resulting actions such as donations, engagement, or service use. An AI mention is a diagnostic signal, not proof of trust or causation.

START NOW:

Create a TRUSTbuilder AI Visibility Audit with a baseline, a named owner, a review rhythm, and a few measures in each category. Use the results to improve the underlying work.



Where Moore and TRUSTbuilder fit

This is the thinking behind TRUSTbuilder, Moore's approach to building trust and driving growth. We start by looking at what an organization can prove, how people experience it, and how its expertise is represented across the channels that shape public understanding. Then we help close the gaps through connected strategy, communications, research, and action. ***The goal is not a better answer for its own sake. The goal is an organization people have reason to trust and support.***

We have also created TRUSTbuilder AI to take the steps you've seen here with you. This helps you understand how you are represented in AI discovery and develop strategies to strengthen brand authority around the topics and questions that matter most to your current and future audiences. The two solutions work well together, as many generic approaches to generative engine optimization yield generic responses. You want your solution to know your brand, how both human and machine understand it, and how you want to guide those perceptions, taking knowledge into practice.

