

ENTITY AUTHORITY

Own the Definition: Becoming the Source AI Uses to Explain Your Category

By Scott Tischler · September 9, 2026 · 8 min read

Every time an AI explains a concept in your field — defines a term, describes how something works, lays out what a category means — it's drawing on a definition it learned from somewhere. Being the source of that definition is one of the quietest and most powerful forms of authority you can build.

Definitional authority is underrated because it doesn't feel like marketing. Owning the definition of a key term in your space means that when anyone asks the AI what that thing is, your framing is the answer. You're not being pitched — you're being treated as the reference. And references get cited far more, and far more durably, than promotional content ever will.

Why definitions are such strong AI-visibility assets

A few things make definitional content unusually valuable to answer engines. First, definitions are exactly what people ask AI for — "what is X," "what does Y mean," "how does Z work" are among the most common queries, and they're the bread and butter of AI answers. Second, a clear, authoritative definition is highly extractable — it's self-contained by nature, which is precisely what the model wants to lift. Third, if you define a term well and others adopt your framing, you accumulate corroboration: the definition spreads, gets repeated, and the model sees consensus forming around your version.

And there's a compounding effect. Once you own the definition of a foundational concept, you tend to get pulled into adjacent answers too — because the model, having learned the concept from you, reaches back to you when it needs related explanation. Owning a definition is a foothold that expands.

How to own a definition

- **Pick the terms worth owning.** Identify the concepts, terms, and frameworks central to your field where a clear, authoritative definition would be genuinely useful — especially ones that are currently defined poorly or inconsistently across the web.

- **Write the clearest definition available.** Lead with a crisp, self-contained explanation that stands on its own. The best definition — clearest, most accurate, most complete — is the one that gets adopted and cited.
- **Explain, don't just label.** A great definitional piece defines the term, then explains why it matters, how it works, and how it relates to neighboring concepts. Depth around the definition is what makes you the reference rather than just a dictionary entry.
- **Be genuinely authoritative.** Definitions carry weight when they come from a credible source. Your definitional content should be tied to real expertise and a recognizable entity, so the model trusts the definition enough to adopt it.
- **Coin and define where you can.** If you can name and clearly define a genuinely useful framework or concept, you have a shot at owning it outright — the definition is yours because you created it. But it has to be real and useful, not jargon for its own sake.

The honest caveat

Owning a definition is earned by being right and clear, not by shouting. You can't force the world to adopt your framing of a term — you earn adoption by producing the definition that's genuinely the most useful and accurate, so people and models reach for it because it's the best one available. And don't manufacture fake jargon to seem authoritative; inventing hollow terminology nobody needs is transparent and does nothing. The goal is to be the source that explained something so clearly and correctly that yours became the definition everyone uses.

This is a long game, but it's one of the most durable positions in AI visibility. Products get compared and swapped; the source that defined the category tends to stay the reference. Find the concepts in your field that deserve a clearer definition than they currently have, write the best one available, and become the answer to "what is this."

Key takeaways

- ♦ When AI defines a term or explains a concept in your field, it's citing a definition it learned somewhere — being that source is quiet, durable authority.
- ♦ Definitional content is high-value: 'what is X' queries are among the most common, definitions are inherently extractable, and good ones accumulate corroboration as they spread.
- ♦ Owning a foundational definition compounds — the model pulls you into adjacent answers because it learned the concept from you.

- ◆ Own a definition by picking terms worth owning, writing the clearest self-contained explanation available, and adding depth around it.
- ◆ Definitions carry weight from credible, recognizable sources — tie definitional content to real expertise and a clear entity.
- ◆ You earn adoption by being the most useful and accurate, not by shouting — and never manufacture hollow jargon to seem authoritative.

Frequently asked questions

What does 'owning a definition' actually mean for AI visibility?

It means being the source an AI draws on when it defines a term or explains a concept in your field. When someone asks 'what is X' or 'how does Y work,' the model answers from a definition it learned somewhere — if that's your clear, authoritative explanation, your framing becomes the answer, and you're treated as the reference rather than a pitch.

Why is definitional content so effective with answer engines?

Three reasons: 'what is' and 'how does' questions are among the most common AI queries; a clear definition is inherently self-contained and therefore highly extractable; and a widely-adopted definition accumulates corroboration as others repeat it. It also compounds — owning a foundational term pulls you into adjacent answers too.

Can I just invent terminology to own it?

Only if it's genuinely useful. If you can name and clearly define a real, helpful framework, you have a shot at owning it outright because you created it. But manufacturing hollow jargon nobody needs is transparent and accomplishes nothing — models and readers see through it. You earn a definition by being the clearest and most accurate, not by coining empty terms.

About the author. Scott Tischler is the Founder & Chairman of Alrecommend.ai and a practitioner-authority on AI search and Answer Engine Optimization. With 20+ years in marketing technology — including American Express, MetLife, and UBS — and executive and professional study at Wharton, Harvard, and Oxford, he helps businesses become the ones AI recommends.