

The B2B Reddit Playbook for the AI Search Era

How to earn a place in the answer when your buyer stops Googling and starts asking AI. A practitioner's guide to getting cited on the platform the machines trust most.

START HERE

Why this exists

Your buyer is changing how they find you. Instead of scrolling ten blue links, they ask an answer engine a question and read one synthesized reply that names a few sources and moves on. If your brand is not one of those sources, you are invisible in a way page two never made you.

This playbook has one goal, and it is not follower growth or vanity reach. The goal is **citation authority**: becoming the source that AI systems surface when someone in your category asks a real question. On Reddit specifically, because that is where the machines look.

#1

Reddit is the single most cited domain across AI answer engines, ahead of YouTube and Wikipedia, and it ranks first for B2B buyer-intent queries on Perplexity. (Profound)

57%

of Reddit posts that mention a brand keep pulling views for more than a year. The work compounds instead of expiring. (Reddit data)

One honest warning before you start. This is rented land. Citation share moves, platforms renegotiate, and the fastest way to torch it all is to try to game it. Reddit detects and punishes manufactured praise better than almost any platform online. Everything below is built on earning presence, not faking it. That is not a limitation of the strategy. It is the strategy.

STEP 01

/ Know exactly who you are talking to

Every other decision in this playbook falls out of this one. Get vague here and you will target the wrong rooms and write for nobody.

Before you map a single subreddit, answer these three questions in plain language. Not marketing personas. Actual people asking an AI an actual question.

- **Who is the buyer?** Role, seniority, and the moment they are in when they would open ChatGPT or Perplexity and type a question you should answer.
- **What decision are they making?** The specific call they are trying to get right. "Which vendor," "is this approach worth it," "how do others solve this." Those are the queries where Reddit gets handed to the model.
- **What do you want to be the answer for?** Pick the narrow territory you can credibly own. Not your whole category. The one question where your point of view is genuinely better than the noise.

THE TEST

If you cannot write the exact question your buyer would type into an AI, you are not ready to target subreddits yet. Write ten of those questions first. They become your whole content map.

STEP 02

/ Map your rooms

Rank subreddits by citation value, not by size. A small, active, frequently cited community beats a giant dead one every time.

Organize your targets into three tiers so your effort goes where it compounds.

Tier 1 // Primary engagement

The handful of communities where your actual buyers gather and compare notes. This is where you build credibility first and post original content later. Most of your time lives here.

Tier 2 // Cross-post and amplify

Adjacent communities where a proven Tier 1 post can travel. Always rewrite the title and intro to fit each community's tone. Never paste the same text twice.

Tier 3 // Monitor only

Large, high citation-value general communities you watch for relevant threads but do not try to own. You comment only when you can add something nobody else is saying.

HOW TO FIND THEM

Reverse-engineer the machine. Take the ten buyer questions from Step 01, ask them in ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews, and note which threads and subreddits get cited. Those citations are your Tier 1 target list, handed to you by the exact systems you are trying to influence.

STEP 03

/ Content positioning: uncomfortable expertise

Reddit scrolls past anything a practitioner already knows. It rewards what is true and unsaid.

A post that repeats industry consensus gets ignored. A post that says something true nobody says out loud gets upvoted, saved, and cited. Your job is to mine your own company for those truths. Sit your leadership down and ask:

- What does your company believe about this category that the industry gets wrong?
- What would your CEO say in a closed room that would never survive a press release?
- What is a failure mode in your space that nobody talks about publicly?
- What does a bad implementation actually look like, and how does it happen?
- What metric does everyone in your category track that is quietly the wrong one to optimize?

Every strong answer to those questions is a post angle. That is where your content comes from. Not the blog calendar.

NON-NEGOTIABLE

AI pulls authentic evaluation and cites criticism as readily as praise. You cannot plant your way in. If you get caught being slick, the community remembers. If you get caught being genuinely useful, they remember that too. Be the second one.

STEP 04

/ Write for the machine that reads Reddit

This is the part almost no one teaches, and it is the whole edge. An AI does not read your post the way a person does.

A language model breaks your post into chunks, turns each chunk into a vector, a numerical fingerprint of its meaning, and at answer time retrieves only the few chunks most relevant to the question asked. It does not retrieve your post. It retrieves a paragraph. How you structure the post decides whether the right paragraph gets pulled or whether the whole thing gets ignored.

The rules for a retrievable post

- **One idea per paragraph.** Each paragraph should make a single complete point that survives being ripped out of context, because it will be.
- **Lead with the claim.** Put the answer in the first sentence, then support it. Do not bury the insight in clause three of sentence five.
- **Be specific and experience-based.** Numbers, tradeoffs, and real scenarios get retrieved. Vague generalities do not.
- **Write in plain language.** Natural phrasing matches how people ask questions, which is what the model is matching against.

THE IDEAL POST STRUCTURE, FIVE CLEAN CHUNKS

1. **The hook.** A claim that stops the scroll and answers a real question.
2. **The context.** Who this is for and why it matters, in one tight block.
3. **The specifics.** The data, the numbers, the concrete detail.
4. **The tradeoffs.** The honest nuance and what it costs. This is what makes it trustworthy.
5. **The takeaway.** The one thing to remember, stated so it can stand alone.

Upvotes are not vanity. Engagement signals, upvotes, comment volume, and account history, help these systems decide which chunks to trust. A post with 50 upvotes is far likelier to surface in an answer than the same post with 3. Earning engagement is part of earning the citation.

STEP 05

/ Engagement tactics and cadence

Credibility precedes content. Skip the discipline here and you get banned from the one community that mattered.

The 60-day rule

Spend your first 60 days only answering existing threads. No original posts until the account has real history and positive karma. Getting banned early removes you from the most valuable community permanently, and there is no appeal that matters.

Expert commentary is the daily play

Find threads where your buyers are already asking questions you can genuinely answer, and answer as a person with real expertise. Disclose your affiliation in your account bio, not as a pitch stapled to every comment. Target three to five substantive comments a week, minimum. Thorough, specific, upvoted answers get scraped and referenced by AI systems again and again. This is the highest-value citation tactic you have.

WHY CONSISTENCY WINS

Reddit's own data: as little as one organic post a week is associated with a 3.5% rise in positive posts about your brand from other users, and even a few genuine comments drive a 2.2% lift. You are not buying attention that vanishes. You are compounding an asset. (Reddit data)

Original posts, after day 60

Once you have standing, three formats punch hardest:

- **Data drops.** "We analyzed X across dozens of accounts. Here is what actually moved the number."
- **Contrarian takes.** "The metric everyone in this category tracks is the wrong one. Here is why."
- **Behind the curtain.** "What a vendor RFP in our space actually looks like from the inside."

The AMA, highest upside

Put a leader with real opinions in front of the community, tied to a news hook so there is a reason to show up. Prep twenty likely questions and their unfiltered answers in advance, get moderator approval at least two weeks out, and pick the subreddit where your buyers actually live. An AMA is where you convert expertise into a wave of citable, timestamped, upvoted content in a single day.

STEP 06

/ Reddit-native craft

The platform mechanics that decide whether your content gets seen or buried.

Build karma without getting banned

Reddit runs both automated spam filters and active human moderators. Read each community's rules before you post, contribute value before you ever mention your company, and never lead with a link. The karma-building phase is not optional. It is the cost of admission to the rooms that matter.

Ride the news hook

Reddit's algorithm surfaces new content hardest in the first two to six hours. A post tied to a breaking development in your category gets more eyeballs in that window than a standalone post gets in a week. Keep a short list of triggers you can react to fast: regulatory changes, major earnings, category news.

Handle pushback like a pro

Communities will challenge a vendor-affiliated account. That is expected and manageable. How you respond decides whether you build credibility or lose it.

THE GOLDEN RULE

Reddit rewards people who are right and honest over people who are promotional and polished. When you are challenged, get more specific and more useful, never more defensive.

STEP 07

/ The operator layer: a monitoring agent

This is the difference between a brand that shows up when it remembers to and one that shows up when it counts.

Treat Reddit like a beat you staff, not a whim you indulge. A lightweight monitoring agent turns "we should really check Reddit" into a system that never misses the thread worth answering.

What it does

- Polls your target subreddits on a schedule for new posts matching your keyword triggers.
- Scores each new thread against your keywords so you see the ones worth answering first.
- Watches your own posts for upvotes, comments, and replies, and alerts you when activity crosses a threshold.
- Sends a summary to email or Slack so the work fits into a normal day.

How to build it

You need three pieces: the Reddit API on its free tier (register an app at reddit.com/prefs/apps), PRAW (the Python Reddit API Wrapper) for the polling, and a notification path to email or a Slack webhook. It can be built and iterated in a tool like Claude Code, and once it is set up, no coding knowledge is required to operate it.

KEYWORD STARTER SET

Seed it with the language your buyers actually use: your category terms, competitor names, the specific problems you solve, and the phrases from your ten buyer questions in Step 01. Refine monthly based on what surfaces.

STEP 08

/ Measure what you can, honestly

This is genuinely hard to attribute, and pretending otherwise will burn your credibility with your own team. Set expectations up front.

- **AI answer presence.** Run your priority questions through ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews on a schedule and record whether your brand and preferred threads appear. Tools automate this now, but a manual monthly audit works to start.
- **Share of citation.** Of the sources the model names, how often is one of them a thread that mentions you.
- **Referral and branded-search lift.** Watch Reddit referral traffic and a rise in branded search as leading indicators, even when direct attribution stays fuzzy.

SET THE EXPECTATION

This is a compounding presence play, not a campaign with a clean conversion line. Measured in months, not weeks. The upside is that the presence keeps paying out long after the work is done.

THE 90-DAY STARTER PLAN

/ From zero to cited

Days 1–14	Define your buyer and ten questions. Map Tier 1 subreddits by reverse-engineering AI citations. Set up accounts with honest bios and stand up your monitoring agent.
Days 1–60	Answer only. Three to five substantive comments a week. No original posts. Build karma and history. Draft your uncomfortable-expertise angles in the background.
Day 60+	Publish your first original posts using the five-chunk structure. Cross-post proven winners to Tier 2. Line up your first AMA against a news hook.
Monthly	Re-run your priority questions through the answer engines. Track presence, share of citation, and branded-search lift. Refine keywords and angles.

APPENDIX

/ Templates to steal

Fill in the brackets. Keep the structure. Every one is written as clean, retrievable chunks.

Post title and hook templates

The [metric] every [role] tracks is the wrong one. Here is why.

What a [category] RFP actually looks like from the vendor side.

We analyzed [X] across [N] [accounts/campaigns]. Here is what actually moved [outcome].

Most [programs/tools] in [category] fail in year two. Here is the pattern.

Full post template, five chunks

[HOOK] One sentence that names a real problem or challenges a common assumption.

[CONTEXT] Who this is for and why it matters right now. One tight block.

[SPECIFICS] The concrete data, numbers, or detail. What you actually saw.

[TRADEOFFS] The honest nuance and what it costs. The part a press release would hide.

[TAKEAWAY] The single thing to remember, written so it stands alone.

Comment response template

Direct answer to their question in the first sentence.

One specific reason or piece of evidence, from real experience.

One honest caveat or tradeoff, so it reads as useful and not as a pitch.

DISCLOSURE LINE FOR YOUR BIO

Keep it plain and honest: "I work in [function] at [company]." That is your disclosure. Do not repeat a sales pitch in individual posts.

The channel that decides whether an AI recommends you is one most brands have never staffed, budgeted, or measured. That gap is the opportunity. Go be genuinely useful in the rooms the machines trust, and get named in the answer.

reWired

// For strategists who want signal, not noise.