

The AI Visibility Study

What we found when we asked AI to name the best lawyer in town, and why it matters to your firm. An original study by Forward Push Law Firm Marketing.

We ran 38,000 "best lawyer" searches across ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and Claude, covering 15 cities and 25 practice areas. We read 38,173 clean answers and counted 96,988 times a firm got named. The question was simple. When someone asks AI who to call, which firms come back?

The short version: a different game than Google. Google hands a searcher ten links and lets them choose. These tools hand back three names and a reason. There is no page two. You are in the answer or you are not.

Five things we found

- **Four tools, four answers.** ChatGPT and Perplexity named the same firms only about 6% of the time. There is no single AI result to win.
- **A few names take the top.** The top 3 firms pull about 34% of every mention in a market. Around 64 firms get named once and then forgotten.
- **The tools behave differently.** ChatGPT, Claude, and Perplexity name a firm almost every time. Gemini names one in only about 13% of its answers.
- **Directories write the answer.** 96% of answers leaned on a directory like Super Lawyers or Justia. 68% cited a firm's own website.
- **Most firms are invisible.** Across more than 15,000 firms named, the vast majority showed up once or not at all.

One real question, asked of all four

Best divorce lawyer in Chicago. Same question, four tools, and look how little they agree:

ChatGPT: Schiller DuCanto & Fleck, Beermann, Berger Schatz

Perplexity: Berger Schatz, Katz & Stefani, Levin Family Law

Gemini: *named no one, gave a checklist instead*

Claude: Schiller DuCanto & Fleck, Beermann, Feinberg Sharma

Three different lists and one tool that named nobody. Showing up in one tool tells you almost nothing about the rest.

The sources AI reads before it answers

On Perplexity, which shows its sources, the same short list of directories carried most of the weight. The most-cited sources, by share of all citations:

- Super Lawyers **15.6%**
- Justia **13.2%**
- Best Law Firms **5.5%**
- Best Lawyers **4.2%**
- BCG Attorney Search **4.2%**
- Chambers **2%**

When AI calls your competitor the best in town, it usually is not reading their About page. It is reading what these sites say and repeating it.

Where firms stand, city by city

For each market, one marquee practice area, the share the top 3 firms took of every mention, and the firms AI named most. These are mentions, not a ranking of who is the better lawyer.

Market	Practice area (example)	Top 3 take	Firms AI named most
New York	Business Law	49%	Cravath Swaine & Moore, Sullivan & Cromwell
Los Angeles	Criminal Defense	45%	Eisner Gorin, Geragos & Geragos
Chicago	Divorce	49%	Schiller DuCanto & Fleck, Beermann
Houston	Personal Injury	36%	Arnold & Itkin, Zehl & Associates
Dallas	Family Law	40%	Orsinger Nelson Downing & Anderson, Goranson Bain Ausley
Miami	Immigration Law	33%	Revilla Law Firm, Kurzban Kurzban Tetzeli & Pratt
Atlanta	Personal Injury	30%	Morgan & Morgan, Kaine Law
Boston / New England	Business Law	66%	Ropes & Gray, Goodwin Procter
San Francisco	Business Law	51%	Cooley, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati
Denver	Business Law	59%	Holland & Hart, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
Charlotte	Criminal Defense	47%	Arnold & Smith, Roberts Law Group
Austin	Immigration Law	48%	Lincoln-Goldfinch Law, Foster
Raleigh	Business Law	53%	Smith Anderson, Poyner Spruill
Charleston	Family Law	48%	The Peck Law Firm, Rosen Law Firm
Columbia	Securities Law	48%	Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, Nexsen Pruet

Most open field: Austin, about 82 firms named per question. Most locked: New York, about 51. Columbia is shared by cities in three states, which muddled some answers.

Why this matters to your firm

- **Your next client asks AI first.** They type best [practice] lawyer in [city], three names come back, and there is no page two. You are in that answer or you are not.
- **Being named is not the same as being better.** A weaker competitor with a strong directory presence will out-appear a stronger firm the machines cannot see. If you have watched that happen, you read it right.
- **Recognition compounds.** These tools learn by repetition. Every month your name sits in the sources they trust, the pattern hardens in your favor, or it hardens for someone else.

What to do about it

- **See where you stand.** Ask all four tools the question a client would, in your city, for your practice. Write down who gets named and which sites get cited.
- **Get onto the sources AI quotes.** Claim and complete your profiles on Super Lawyers, Justia, Best Lawyers, and the rest, with your firm's details identical everywhere.
- **Win each engine on its own.** Showing up in ChatGPT tells you nothing about Perplexity. Check all four, find the gaps, and work them one at a time.

The bottom line. The firms that get recognized in AI now will compound that lead every month. The ones that wait will spend years trying to catch up. We will run your firm through all four tools and show you exactly where you stand.

Learn more at forwardpush.com.