

The architecture practice *playbook*

How to become a practice ChatGPT names when clients look for an architect



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ChatGPT recommends practices it can read about, not look at. Name your sectors, write project pages that explain the brief, constraints, decisions and outcome, and link each architect's ARB registration number to their entry on the Architects Register. Keep the practice name and description identical across your site, RIBA's directory, the AJ100, Dezeen, Archello and planning records.

For founders, directors and partners of UK architecture and interior design practices working for developers, housing associations, school trusts, public bodies and commercial occupiers.

Business clients now start with an AI assistant. A housing association's development director asks Claude which architects in the North West have designed later living schemes. A trust's estates lead asks ChatGPT for practices that have built classrooms on occupied school sites. Each gets a handful of names, and those names have a head start on the shortlist. Forrester found in January 2026 that 94% of business buyers use AI in their buying process.

If your practice is not named, it is rarely because your work is weaker. It is usually because the assistant cannot see your work at all. Your best projects live in photographs, and assistants read words. The good news is that you already write a great deal. Design and access statements, planning reports and competition submissions hold the reasoning an assistant needs, and almost none of it reaches your website.

94%

of business buyers use AI in their buying process

FORRESTER, JANUARY 2026

4 times

how much more likely business buyers are than consumers to use Microsoft Copilot

FORRESTER, JANUARY 2026

42,000+

architects on ARB's official register, and only the title is protected

ARB, WHO CAN USE THE TITLE ARCHITECT (SEPTEMBER 2026)

02	What your buyers ask	P3
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07	Read more	P8

The questions that decide *who gets the call.*

Business clients combine a building type, a client type, a place and a constraint in one question.

BUYER ASKS

Which architects in Manchester specialise in later living schemes for housing associations?

BUYER ASKS

Which practices have delivered school extensions on occupied sites?

BUYER ASKS

Workplace architects in Leeds for a Cat B office fit-out

BUYER ASKS

Architects with experience of converting offices to residential in London

BUYER ASKS

Is the principal designer under the Building Regulations the same as under CDM?

BUYER ASKS

What percentage of build cost do architects charge for a commercial project?

BUYER ASKS

Is this practice good to work with?

TRY THIS

Ask five of these in ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot and Perplexity, each in a fresh chat. Note who is named, and who is named instead of you. Answers vary from run to run, so only count a result that repeats.

How the assistants choose

01 Sectors, building types and region

'Architecture, interiors and masterplanning' cannot be matched to a housing association's question. 'Later living and affordable housing for housing associations across the North West' can.

02 Written project evidence

Project pages that explain the brief, the site, the key decisions and the outcome. A gallery with a title and a year tells an assistant almost nothing.

03 Credentials that can be checked

Each architect's ARB registration number linked to their register entry, plus RIBA Chartered Practice status and memberships such as CIAT, BILD or the Landscape Institute.

04 Independent records of your work

RIBA's directory, the AJ100, Dezeen, Archello, planning records and awards, each naming your practice beside a project.

05 Consistency

Practices change names when partners retire or merge. If your website, Companies House, RIBA's directory and old award listings describe you differently, the assistant struggles to connect the evidence.

The sources assistants *trust in your field.*

An assistant rarely names a firm on its own website's word. It looks for the same facts in places that have checked you independently. These are the ones that matter most for architecture and design.

SOURCE	WHY IT COUNTS	WHAT TO DO
ARB Architects Register	It is the official list of registered architects and a public record an assistant can match to your name.	Link each architect's registration number to their register entry on their team page, and keep the entry public and current.
RIBA Find an Architect	It lists Chartered Practices by location with projects, which gives another independent record of your sectors.	Check that your sectors, location and projects match your website.
The AJ100	The Architects' Journal's annual ranking of UK practices is another public record that names your practice.	Make sure your practice name there matches every other record.
Dezeen and Archello	Their project pages carry text, credits and images that assistants can read.	Match the project name, client type and credits to your own project page.
Planning portals	Applications usually name the agent, which ties your practice to real schemes.	Check the agent name matches your trading name.
Awards and frameworks	RIBA awards, Civic Trust Awards and framework places create public records that name you beside a judgement of your work.	Put each award on the relevant project page, with what the judges recognised, not only in the footer.

Common mistakes

Letting the photographs do the talking

Assistants recommend on text. Keep the photography, but put a written account beside every important project and captions that explain what each image shows.

Saying you design everything

Assistants match specific questions to specific evidence. Lead with the one or two sectors where your record is deepest, and you will often be named for adjacent questions too.

Writing 'ARB registered' and stopping there

Anyone can provide architectural services. Only the title is protected. A registration number linked to the register entry is something an assistant can check.

A website built only to be looked at

Project filters loaded by scripts, brochures only in PDF and AI crawlers blocked without anyone knowing all hide your work. Cloudflare changed its default to block AI crawlers in July 2025.

Ten questions. *Be honest.*

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|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 01 | Does your homepage say in one sentence which sectors you lead with and where? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
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|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 02 | Does the same sentence appear on LinkedIn and your RIBA directory listing? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 03 | Does every team page give the architect's ARB registration number, linked to their register entry? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 04 | Do your team pages give each person's role and experience, not just a name and photograph? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 05 | Do your three most important project pages explain the brief, the constraints, the key decisions, how it was delivered and what happened next? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 06 | Do your image captions say what each picture shows and why it matters? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 07 | Is your practice name identical on RIBA's directory, Dezeen, Archello, award listings and planning records? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 08 | Have you published a dated page on the two principal designer roles and which ones your practice takes on? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 09 | Can AI crawlers read every project and team page, without scripts, PDFs or text set inside images getting in the way? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10 | Have you explained on your own site how you charge and what changes the fee? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
-

Fewer than seven yeses means clients asking an assistant for an architect are probably being given other practices' names.

What to do this month, *and next.*

This month

- 01 Write one sentence that says which sectors you lead with and where, and use it on your homepage, LinkedIn and RIBA directory listing.
- 02 Add each architect's ARB registration number, linked to their register entry, plus roles and experience, to every team page.
- 03 Rewrite your three most important project pages in five steps: the brief, the site and constraints, the key decisions, delivery and what happened next.
- 04 Check your practice name and credits on RIBA's directory, Dezeen, Archello, award listings and planning records, and correct any that differ.
- 05 Publish one dated page on the two principal designer roles and which ones your practice takes on.
- 06 Ask your web designer to confirm crawlers can read every project and team page and that images carry descriptive alternative text.

The next ninety days

- 01 Turn the public parts of your design and access statements, client notes and CPD talks into plain-English guides for business clients.
- 02 Publish a stage-by-stage guide to the RIBA Plan of Work for first-time commercial clients, with what they must decide at each stage.
- 03 Explain how your fees are structured for the project types you do most.
- 04 Agree what can be shared about a project at appointment, not at completion, so every new job can become a written project page.
- 05 Set up a fixed list of 20 to 50 client questions and run each several times a month in a clean session.

How to tell it is working

- Your practice named on more of your fixed client questions, counting a win only when it repeats.
- Better-briefed enquiries, which is where most practices notice the change first.
- Rewritten project pages and fixed listings showing within weeks in assistants that search the web live, such as ChatGPT search, Perplexity and Copilot.
- Clients mentioning your sector pages or project write-ups when they first get in touch.

Straight answers.

Which architects in Manchester specialise in later living schemes for housing associations?

An assistant answers this from practices whose pages, listings and awards say 'later living', 'housing association' and 'Manchester' about completed schemes. To be in that answer you need a later living sector page, project pages for each scheme with the client type and location, and the same wording on your RIBA directory entry and in trade press coverage.

Is RIBA Chartered Practice status worth having?

For a practice that wants business clients, usually yes, because it is a public, checkable standard. RIBA requires at least one full-time director or partner to be a Chartered Member, at least one in eight staff to be Chartered Members, professional indemnity insurance and a set of policies. Chartered Practices appear in RIBA's directory, another independent record an assistant can use.

How do we publish projects when clients want confidentiality?

Agree what can be shared at appointment, not at completion. Many clients are happy with a written account once the building is complete, especially when it presents their project well. Where they are not, describe the sector, scale, location and constraints without naming the client or showing sensitive areas. A headquarters fit-out can be described without the tenant's name.

Can a small practice compete with large ones?

Often more easily than in a formal bid. A six-person practice that is clearly the specialist in listed commercial buildings in one city can be named ahead of a large practice whose relevant work is buried among hundreds of projects. Clear specialism, well-written project pages and checkable credentials matter more than size.

arum®

arum is not an architecture practice. It advises banks, governments and major brands on collections technology, but it had the problem many practices have: a strong track record and a website that undersold it.

310

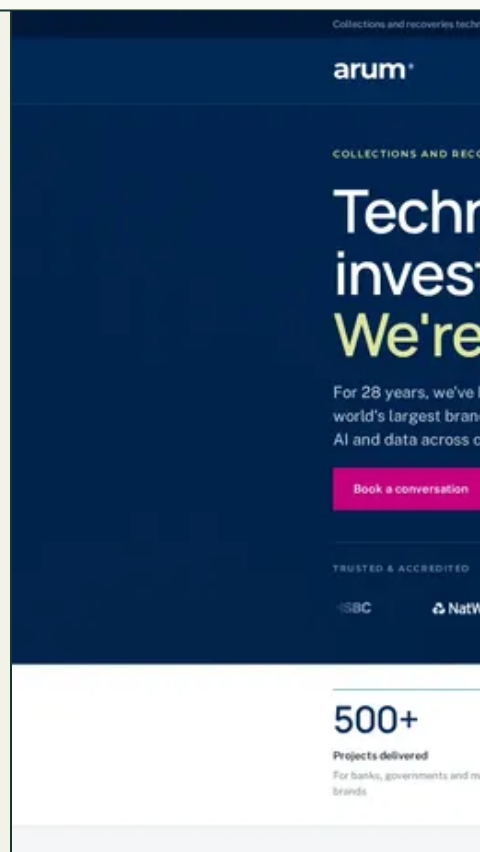
pages rebuilt across three regions, in weeks

PROBLEM	A 28-year track record, more than 500 projects in 23 countries, and a website that undersold it.
WHAT WE DID	Rewrote every word, sharpened the brand and rebuilt 310 pages across three regions.
RESULT	A website that finally does the firm justice, delivered in weeks rather than months.

"It was obvious from day one that they are founders themselves."

Jamie Waller, CEO and Executive Chair, arum

[READ THE CASE STUDY](#) ➤



The full guides, *free and dated.*

How does an architecture practice get recommended by ChatGPT?



Should our content answer the questions our customers actually ask?



How do AI crawlers read my website, and are we letting them in?



Why does ChatGPT describe my firm wrongly, and how do I fix it?



Do awards and accreditations make ChatGPT more likely to recommend us?



How does a commercial property firm get named when businesses ask ChatGPT?



SOURCES

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[GOV.UK, Circular letter: changes to the building control process \(March 2024\)](#)

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[Vercel, The rise of the AI crawler \(December 2024\)](#)

[Cloudflare, Content Independence Day: no AI crawl without compensation \(July 2025\)](#)



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