

The construction *playbook*

How to become a contractor ChatGPT names when clients ask for a shortlist



David Adams

Co-founder and CEO, Fortitude Media

AI assistants name construction firms they can place clearly: a stated specialism, a defined region, recent written-up projects and accreditations they can check. Most contractors' websites show a gallery and a phone number. Write project pages that say what, where, for whom and how, make your listings match, and keep dated pages on the rules clients worry about.

For owners and managing directors of UK specialist contractors, M&E firms, fit-out companies and regional builders.

Construction still runs on repeat clients, supply chains and frameworks. What has changed is where the first shortlist comes from when the client is new or a procurement team wants names to invite. Estates managers, developers, housing associations and main contractors now ask ChatGPT, Copilot or Google's AI Overviews which firms have done this kind of job, in this kind of building, in this area.

The assistant answers with three names. If your firm did exactly that job last summer, on programme, but your website shows only a captioned gallery, you are not one of them. Buyers have usually ranked their preferred suppliers before first contact, and main contractors use assistants to check firms they have been given. A firm that looks thin online can lose out even when the introduction came through a relationship.

94%

of cases, buying groups had already ranked their preferred suppliers before first contact, in a survey of more than 4,000 B2B buyers

6SENSE, NOVEMBER 2025

27 January 2026

the Building Safety Regulator left the HSE to become a standalone body

GOV.UK, JANUARY 2026

24 March 2027

new Part L standards come into force in England, or 24 September 2027 for higher-risk building work

GOV.UK, MARCH 2026

02	What your buyers ask	P3
03	Where they check you	P4
04	Where you stand	P5
05	The plan	P6
06	Questions and proof	P7
07	Read more	P8

The questions that decide *who gets the call.*

Clients ask about their project, their building, their place and their constraints, not about contractors in general.

BUYER ASKS

Which M&E contractors in Surrey have worked in occupied schools over the summer?

BUYER ASKS

Which fit-out contractors in Manchester have done Cat B office fit-outs for professional firms?

BUYER ASKS

Who are the best M&E contractors in the South West for schools and colleges?

BUYER ASKS

Which fire door installers near Birmingham are third-party certified?

BUYER ASKS

Do I need Constructionline Gold or is CHAS enough to get on a main contractor's supply chain?

BUYER ASKS

Who approves building work on higher-risk buildings now?

BUYER ASKS

Who can replace a flat roof on a warehouse without stopping operations?

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 A specialism in plain words

"Mechanical and electrical services for schools, colleges and care homes" can be matched to a question. "Building services solutions" cannot.

02 A region

Where you are based and the counties or cities you cover, backed by projects in that area.

03 Recent, written-up projects

The type of building, the client type, the location, the scope and the outcome, written in text an assistant can read.

04 Checks that agree

Accreditations, trade bodies, Companies House, your Google Business Profile and reviews that say the same as your website.

05 Size is not the deciding factor

A twenty-person specialist with thirty well-written project pages can be named ahead of a national contractor for a narrow question.

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 construction.

SOURCE	WHY IT COUNTS	WHAT TO DO
SSIP schemes such as CHAS, SafeContractor and SMAS Worksafe	They answer whether a firm is safe to have on site.	Check your entry uses the same name, address and description as your website.
Build UK's Common Assessment Standard, through Constructionline and other recognised bodies	It answers whether a main contractor will accept you.	Find out which certificate and level each main contractor accepts, then state yours plainly.
Self-certification scheme registers such as NICEIC, NAPIT, Gas Safe Register and MCS	Scheme operators must keep a public register, which is the record an assistant can find.	Check your entry is current and matches your trading name.
Third-party certification such as FIRAS or BM TRADA	It answers whether an installer of fire doors or fire stopping is certified.	Name the scheme and link to your listing on your accreditations page.
Trade and quality bodies such as FMB, BESA, ECA, TrustMark and the Considerate Constructors Scheme	Membership tells an assistant you are an established firm.	List each membership in text, with a link.
Companies House and your Google Business Profile	Assistants look for agreement, and old addresses or shortened names give them several versions of you to reconcile.	Match your company name, address and description everywhere.

Common mistakes

A gallery instead of evidence

"Commercial project, Guildford" under a photo tells an assistant almost nothing. A written page on what, where, for whom and how does.

Claiming everything everywhere

A firm that is clearly the specialist in one or two types of work in one region is named far more often than one that claims all trades nationally.

Dozens of town pages

Near-identical pages with the town name swapped are treated as thin by search engines and assistants. State your area and back it with projects there.

Stale compliance pages

The Building Safety Regulator and Part L have both moved. A compliance page that is out of date does more harm than none.

Ten questions. *Be honest.*

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|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 01 | Does your homepage opening name one or two specialisms and a region in plain words? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 02 | Have you published at least ten written project pages in the work you want more of? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 03 | Does each project page give the building and client type, location, scope, what made it hard and the outcome? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 04 | Is project text in the page itself, rather than in uncaptioned photos, image brochures or scripts? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 05 | Do Companies House, Constructionline, your SSIP scheme, your self-certification register, Google Business Profile and your website use the same name, address and description? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
-
- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 06 | Do you have an accreditations page listing every scheme, standard and trade body in full, with the level held and a link to each listing? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
-
- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 07 | Can a main contractor see plainly which Common Assessment Standard certificate and level you hold? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 08 | Do your pages on the Building Safety Regulator and Part L reflect the 2026 changes, with a "last checked" date? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 09 | Do you explain what drives cost on your kind of work, without publishing tender pricing? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10 | Do you ask "how did you hear about us" on every enquiry and count invitations to tender from new clients? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
-

Fewer than seven yeses means a client asking an assistant for contractors in your area is probably being given other names.

What to do this month, *and next.*

This month

-
- 01 Match your company name, address and description across Companies House, Constructionline, your SSIP scheme, your self-certification scheme register, Google Business Profile and your website.
 - 02 Write an accreditations page listing every scheme, standard and trade body in full, with the level you hold and a link to each listing.
 - 03 Write up ten recent projects in the work you want more of, and publish a short page for each.
 - 04 Update anything you publish on the Building Safety Regulator or Part L and add a "last checked" date.
 - 05 Agree one or two specialisms and a region, and rewrite your homepage opening to say so.
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The next ninety days

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- 01 Ask each main contractor you want to work for which certificate and level they accept, and say plainly which one you hold.
 - 02 Publish a page explaining what drives cost on your main type of work, such as existing services, working hours, access and plant lead times, with any ranges dated and their assumptions stated.
 - 03 Publish a page on how you phase work in occupied buildings such as schools, surgeries and warehouses.
 - 04 Ask clients at handover for permission to name them, or describe the client type and give a value band instead.
 - 05 Track a fixed list of 20 to 50 questions your best clients would ask, several times a month in a clean session.
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How to tell it is working

- Run a fixed list of 20 to 50 client questions several times a month, and count a win only when it repeats.
- Ask "how did you hear about us" on every enquiry.
- Expect pages and listings to show within weeks in assistants that search the web, and months in answers from a model's memory.
- Count invitations to tender from new clients.

Straight answers.

Our work comes from repeat clients and main contractors. Does this matter for us?

Yes, though less urgently than for a firm chasing new clients. Main contractors and project managers use assistants to check firms they have been given. A firm that looks thin online can lose out at that stage even when the introduction came through a relationship.

Can we name clients and show project values?

Only with permission, which many clients give at handover. Otherwise, describe the client type and building, such as "a regional housing association" or "a Grade II listed office in York", and give a value band rather than an exact figure. The assistants need specifics about the work, not necessarily the client's name.

Will a national contractor always be named ahead of us?

No. National firms tend to be named for broad questions, but most client questions are narrow: a type of work, a building, a place and a constraint. A regional specialist with clear evidence for that combination can be the closer match, and a twenty-person firm with well-written project pages can win.

Do I need Constructionline Gold, or is CHAS enough?

It depends on what the main contractor asks for, so ask them. Every Constructionline level includes SSIP health and safety, Gold is the level that meets the Common Assessment Standard, and Platinum adds an on-site audit. CHAS can also certify to the standard. Say plainly on your accreditations page which one you hold.

arum®

arum works in collections and recoveries, not construction, but like many contractors it had a long record of real projects, more than 500 in 23 countries, and a website that undersold it.

310

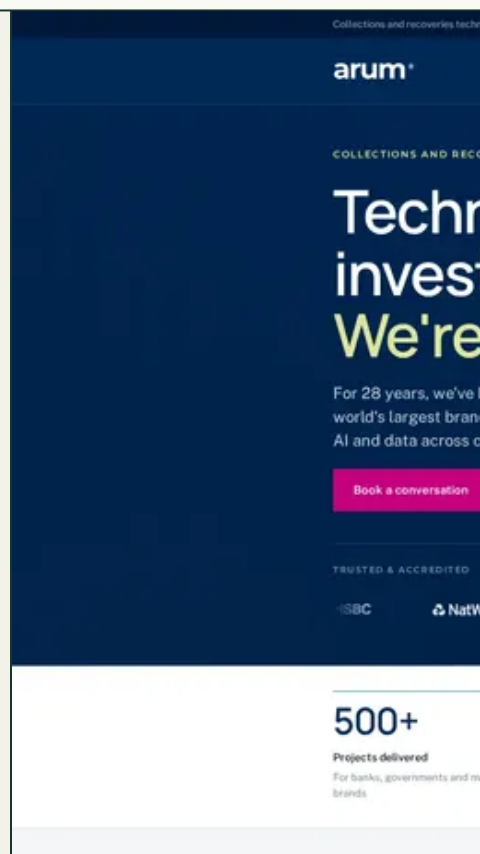
pages rebuilt across three regions, in weeks

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 a construction firm get named when clients ask ChatGPT?



Why does ChatGPT ignore our website when we have hundreds of pages?



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 an architecture practice get recommended by ChatGPT?



SOURCES

[6sense, 2025 Buyer Experience Report \(November 2025\)](#)

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

[GOV.UK, Self-certification schemes: mandatory technical competence requirements \(July 2026\)](#)

[Build UK, Common Assessment Standard \(July 2026\)](#)

[Constructionline, Sub-contractor memberships \(September 2026\)](#)

[GOV.UK, BSR becomes standalone body \(January 2026\)](#)

[GOV.UK, The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: Building Circular 01/2026 \(March 2026\)](#)



WRITTEN BY

David Adams

Co-founder and CEO, Fortitude Media

David spent thirteen years in SaaS, from retention calls to COO and then CRO of a £30 million partner-led business. He runs Fortitude, builds the tools behind it and runs Pipeline That Fills.

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