DARK HORSE WORKS
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Building Your Brand, Team & Everything In Between

TWELVE MARKETING TERMS IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Marketing Words, Translated.
Know What You're Paying For.

A marketing consultant says the business needs geofencing, schema, and AEO. You nod, because asking what they mean feels like admitting you are behind. Then the invoice arrives, and you still cannot say what you bought or how it is even supposed to help your company. That costs money twice: once on work you cannot judge, and again when a good idea gets turned down just because the words sounded complicated. None of these terms is hard once someone says it plainly. Each entry below says what the term means and why you should even care, simply.

Twelve Terms, Translated

1 Geofencing
In plain words: Showing ads to people who are in an area you choose, such as a trade show hall or a business park. The ads appear in the apps and social media feeds they already use, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google, on phones and computers. You also choose the interests and search terms you want to reach, so the ads go to the people in that area who care about what you do.
Why care: Instead of paying to reach everyone, you reach people who are in the right place and interested in the right things.

2 SEO (search engine optimization)
In plain words: Building your website and content around the keywords buyers type into a search engine, the words and phrases they use to describe what they need, so your pages show up in the list of results. Google is the biggest, but buyers also search with Firefox, Bing, Yahoo, DuckDuckGo, and others, and the same work helps on all of them.
Why care: Many buyers start with a search. If your site does not use the words they type, you do not show up in the list.

3 AEO (answer engine optimization)
In plain words: Writing clear, short answers to the questions your buyers ask, so search engines and voice assistants can pick up your answer and show it directly, often at the top of the results, without the buyer having to click anywhere. SEO gets you into the list. AEO aims to make your answer the one that is shown.
Why care: Many searches are now questions, and the answer often appears right on the results page. The business that supplies the answer gets seen first.

4 GEO (generative engine optimization)
In plain words: Making your business something AI tools like ChatGPT and Google AI will recognize, trust, and name. It depends less on keywords and more on clear, consistent information about your business across your website, your listings, and your reviews. SEO gets you listed. AEO gets your answer used. GEO get you mentioned & recommended.
Why care: Buyers often settle on a short list before they contact anyone, and AI tools are increasingly helping build it. If you are not named, you may not make the list.

5 Schema Mark-Up
In plain words: Behind-the-scenes labels in your website's code that tell search engines and AI tools who you are and what each page is about: your business name, address, hours, service areas, and the services you offer. Visitors never see them, but machines read them, so they do not have to guess. It supports SEO, AEO, and GEO.
Why care: Without labels, machines guess what your pages mean, and a wrong guess can leave you out. It will not lift your ranking alone, but it helps your other work get read.

6 Retargeting
In plain words: Showing ads to people who have already visited your website, used your app, or interacted with your business. A small piece of tracking code on your website, such as a pixel or tag, quietly and anonymously tags each visitor's browser. When that person later goes to other websites, uses social media, or watches videos, your ad can appear in front of them.
Why care: It keeps your name in front of buyers who already showed interest, which helps when a decision takes weeks or months.

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7 Impressions, Reach, and Clicks

In plain words: An impression is one time an ad appeared on someone's screen, even if they scrolled past it. Reach is how many different people saw it, so one person seeing it five times is five impressions but a reach of one. A click is one time someone tapped the ad, though not every click goes to your website, and the click-through rate is the share of impressions that led to a click.
Why care: For brand work, reach among the right people matters more than total clicks.

8 Social Listening

In plain words: Watching what people say and ask about your business, your competitors, and your industry on social media and across the web, including mentions where you were never tagged. Then using what you learn, the words buyers use and the questions they ask, to update your website and messaging so they use the same words and answer the same questions.
Why care: Matching your website and messaging to what buyers actually say can help search engines and AI tools find and cite you more often.

9 Thought Leadership

In plain words: Sharing what you know, through articles, posts, talks, and videos, so buyers see you as the expert before they need you. It is also how you get found online: each piece answers a question buyers search for, uses the words they use, and gives search engines and AI tools something real to find, quote, and cite.
Why care: Buyers trust a company that has already helped them understand something, and content that answers their questions is what search engines and AI tools pick up.

10 Ideal Client Profile (ICP)

In plain words: A written description of the customers you most want more of: the type of business, its size, where it is, the person who hires you, and the problem that makes them call. It comes from studying your best customers, not from guessing. It also tells you whose words and questions to write for.
Why care: It tells you who to aim your website, ads, and outreach at, so you stop paying to reach people who will never hire you.

11 Positioning

In plain words: Deciding what problem you solve for your ideal clients and what makes you the better choice, then saying it the same way everywhere. It is the thinking behind your website, messaging, and ads, not a slogan. It's what separates you from competitors.
Why care: Without it, you try to speak to everyone and end up speaking to no one, and buyers cannot tell you apart from the next company.

12 Go-To-Market (GTM) Strategy

In plain words: Your plan for reaching and winning your customers: who you are aiming at, what you say to them, which channels you will use, such as your website, search, social media, events, and ads, and in what order. It sits on top of your ideal client profile (who) and your positioning (why you).
Why care: Without a plan, marketing becomes one-off spending on whatever a vendor pitches, with nothing tying it together. A plan also lets you tell which parts are working.

A simple test for any term you hear: if the person selling it cannot explain it in a sentence you understand, ask again. A good vendor welcomes the question, and a vague answer is information too.

Dark Horse Works explains every step in plain language before any work begins. That is how The Checkmate, our Brand Visibility System for field service businesses, is built. Want an honest look at what you have now? Take our free Marketing Assessment, or submit your website and social profiles for a free audit, at darkhorseworks.consulting/tools.