

If your story is messy, AI scales the *mess.*

Dentsu Creative's brand playbook for an AI future,
read for NZ small business.

58% of searches end without a click.

Dentsu Creative published Word of Mouth, Word of Machine in June. The argument underneath that number is blunt. **Your brand is now whatever the LLM says it is.**

You get described before you get visited.

Clarity.

If your brand story is messy, AI will scale the mess.

LLMs aggregate what already exists. An unclear or inconsistent story gets reflected back to your customers, amplified. Dentsu's first principle is not new. It is brand basics, with a much bigger cost for getting it wrong.

Clarity first. Everything else is downstream.

Readable.

If AI cannot understand you, it will not recommend you.

Structure, link and contextualise your brand information so a machine can interpret it. Dentsu frames this as the shift from SEO to GEO. The attributes matter, and the relationships between them matter more.

Scattered content reads as a scattered brand.

Consistency *across time.*

LLMs do not forget. They trawl years of campaigns, coverage and reviews and treat all of it as your permanent record. One Dentsu client had AI summaries undercutting their quality message with a **low-cost campaign from 10 years ago**. Inconsistency does not read as evolution. It gets averaged.

Earned.

Create conversations machines want to listen in on.

Peer reviews, recommendations and community discussion carry disproportionate weight with LLMs. Reddit users in the US trust Reddit twice as much as LLMs for a final purchase decision. In the UK, nearly four times.

What people say when you are not in the room.

Authority.

Recent and repeated beats loud.

Dentsu found 39% of influential sources referenced by LLMs had been recently published or updated. LLMs also nudge toward the centre, so provocation stops paying. Consistent, qualified, verifiable voices win.

The loudest voices lose to those with something worth saying.

Sources.

- Dentsu Creative. Word of Mouth, Word of Machine: A Brand Playbook for an AI Future. Published 7 June 2026.
- Zero-click figure via WARC. AI search preference via McKinsey, The Agentic Commerce Opportunity.
- Reddit trust figures via Reddit Path to Purchase 2026. US n=13,956, UK n=6,485.
- dentsu.com/uk/en/word-of-mouth-word-of-machine

— OVER TO YOU

Which of the five is *weakest* for your brand?

For most NZ small businesses it is the first one.

The BUILD Scorecard checks your clarity before it checks your tools. Link in the comments.

LET ME KNOW IN COMMENTS ↓