

AI search report · September 2026

Alder Accounting

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● Example report. Every business, answer and figure in it is fictional.

Executive summary

AI tools named Alder Accounting more often in September.

In September, AI tools named Alder Accounting in **33.0%** of the 1,280 answers we checked, up from 26.5% in August. Most of the rise came from payroll questions, after the payroll page was rebuilt on 4 September [E4](#).

Ledgerly is still named more often, in 44.6% of answers. That is mainly because AI tools quote Ledgerly's own comparison page [E2](#) and a review site where Alder Accounting has no listing [E3](#). The three actions in this report go after those two sources.

AI visibility

33.0% +6.5 pts

of 1,280 answers, 5 AI tools

Answers naming Alder

422

40 questions tracked

Rank among 4 firms

2nd

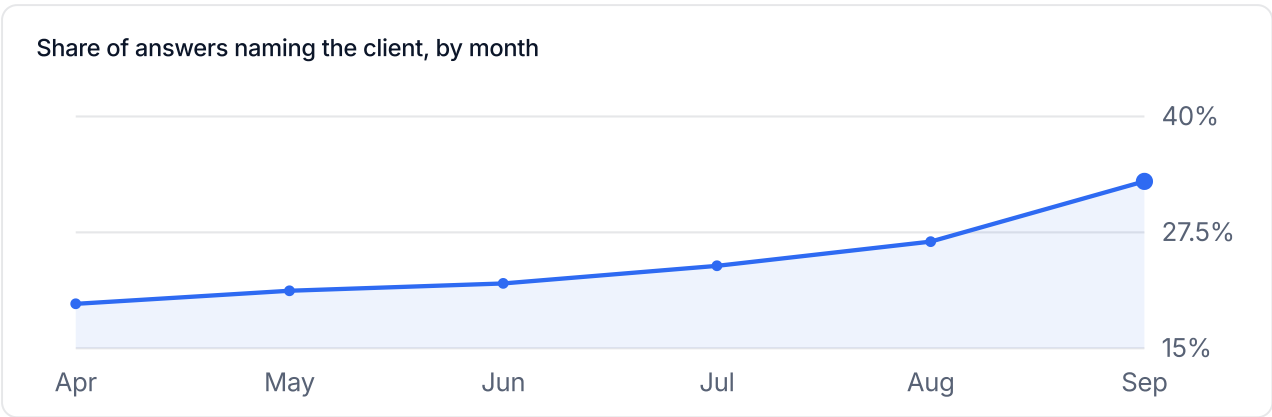
Ledgerly leads at 44.6%

Changes shipped

3

this month, listed below

How often each AI tool named Alder Accounting



AI tool	Answers checked	Named Alder	Share	vs August
ChatGPT	320	109	34.1%	+6.6 pts
Google AI Overviews	320	99	30.9%	+5.6 pts
Perplexity	320	134	41.9%	+8.1 pts
Gemini Beta	160	42	26.3%	+6.3 pts
Claude Beta	160	38	23.8%	+5.0 pts
All tools	1,280	422	33.0%	+6.5 pts

Gemini and Claude are in beta in Embrisk: we check them half as often, so their figures move more from month to month.

Who AI tools name instead

Share of the same 1,280 answers that named each firm, with the change from August in points. An answer can name more than one firm.



Key questions

Five of the 40 questions we track

Question	Named Alder	Named first	Answer
"Which accounting firm is best for a small business that runs payroll?"	3 of 32 was 2	Ledgerly	E1
"Ledgerly or Alder Accounting for a business with two companies?"	22 of 32 was 21	Ledgerly	E2
"How much does an accountant cost for a small business?"	0 of 32 was 0	Ledgerly	E3
"Who can handle bookkeeping and payroll for a 20-person company?"	31 of 32 was 18	Alder Accounting	E4
"Best accountant for a company with its own finance staff?"	9 of 32 was 8	Countway	—

Recommended actions

What we recommend next, in order

Action 1 High priority

Publish Alder's own comparison page for businesses with more than one company

When AI tools compare the two firms, they quote Ledgerly's comparison page. Alder has no page of its own that answers the question. E2

What to do

A page comparing Alder and Ledgerly on group reporting, price and support, with a summary table near the top.

Effort

Medium, about 2 days

Owner

Meridian content team

How we will measure it

How Alder is described in the 32 monthly answers to the comparison question.

Action 2 High priority

Get Alder listed on accountingreview.example, with current prices

Every pricing answer we collected took its figures from this review site. Ledgerly and Countway are listed there. Alder is not. E3 E1

What to do

Submit and verify a listing with Alder's price ranges and services, then keep them current.

Effort

Low, about half a day

Owner

Alder Accounting, with Meridian's help

How we will measure it

Whether pricing answers start to name Alder. Today: 0 of 32.

Action 3

Medium priority

Answer the payroll question directly on the payroll page

AI tools already cite the rebuilt payroll page for one payroll question, but Alder is missing from 29 of 32 answers to the most common one. [E1](#) [E4](#)

What to do

Add a short section that answers who Alder's payroll service is for, what it costs and how it compares.

Effort

Low, about 3 hours

Owner

Meridian content team

How we will measure it

Alder's share of answers to the payroll question. Today: 3 of 32.

This month's progress

What Meridian Digital shipped in September

4 Sep

Rebuilt the payroll page around the questions clients ask

Alder named in 31 of 32 answers to the bookkeeping and payroll question, up from 18.

11 Sep

Fixed 9 service pages that search engines could not read

All 9 pages now open for crawlers. Too early to see an effect on answers.

19 Sep

Added clear price ranges to the pricing page

Not yet cited in answers. We keep measuring it in October.

A note on cause. Visibility rose in the month this work shipped. That is a correlation, not proof that the work caused it. Two checks make it more likely: the 40 questions were the same in both months, and Ledgerly and Countway moved by less than 2 points on them.

Next month: the three actions above, then a fresh reading of the same 40 questions in the October report.

Evidence

The answers behind the findings

Excerpts of answers as they were collected. In the product, each one opens the full answer with every source it cited.

E1 ChatGPT 18 Sep 2026

"Which accounting firm is best for a small business that runs payroll?"

"For a small business that runs its own payroll, **Ledgerly** is the most common recommendation, mainly for its fixed monthly price. **Countway** suits firms with an in-house bookkeeper, and **Brightbooks** is a lower-cost option for very small teams..."

Sources cited: ledgerly.example/payroll · accountingreview.example/best-payroll-accountants · smallbizforum.example/t/payroll-accountant

Alder Accounting is not named. None of the three sources mentions Alder.

E2 Perplexity 22 Sep 2026

"Ledgerly or Alder Accounting for a business with two companies?"

"**Ledgerly** is generally the better fit for more than one entity, with group reporting included [1]. **Alder Accounting** focuses on single-company small businesses [1][2]..."

Sources cited: ledgerly.example/compare/alder-accounting · accountingreview.example/ledgerly-review

Alder is named, but described in Ledgerly's words. The main source is Ledgerly's own comparison page.

E3 Google AI Overviews 15 Sep 2026

"How much does an accountant cost for a small business?"

"Small-business accounting usually costs \$150 to \$400 a month, depending on payroll and the number of entities. Review sites list **Ledgerly** from \$189 and **Countway** from \$240..."

Sources cited: accountingreview.example/accountant-pricing-guide · countway.example/pricing

Alder is not named. Prices come from a review site where Alder has no listing.

E4 ChatGPT 25 Sep 2026

"Who can handle bookkeeping and payroll for a 20-person company?"

"**Alder Accounting** offers bookkeeping and payroll as one service for teams under 25, with a named accountant [1]. **Ledgerly** is an alternative if you prefer software-led support..."

Sources cited: alderaccounting.example/payroll

Alder is named first, citing the payroll page rebuilt on 4 September.

How we measured

What these numbers are, and are not

- We asked 40 questions a customer of Alder Accounting might ask, on five AI tools, on a fixed schedule: 1,280 answers in September.

- Visibility is the share of those answers that named Alder Accounting. It is an estimate from a sample, not a count of every answer anyone saw.
- AI answers change from one try to the next. Read the direction over several months more than a single figure.
- The question set was the same in August and September, so the two months compare like for like.