RESEARCH / 2026

Life Moments Report 2026

The human situations behind AI recommendations.



Moment intelligence for the point where demand begins.

aiaethon.com

01 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The shortlist starts with a story.

A move. A new baby. A business deadline. People describe what changed. AI assistants can turn those stories into needs, options and brand recommendations.

2,400+
moments mapped

20
industries in the report

4
assistants tracked

Aethon's published report scope. Assistant coverage: ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity.

01 Context comes before the query.

The situation often carries the need: a cracked crown on vacation implies urgency, location and access to care, not just a dental keyword.

02 Constraints shape the recommendation.

Industry libraries connect deadlines, eligibility, credentials and logistics to the kind of provider or product a person needs.

03 Visibility needs an action loop.

CAPM links moment discovery to assistant answers and practical fixes. GEO and AEO remain useful; moment intelligence adds the demand context.

THE MARKETING IMPLICATION

Organize around the situation a buyer is living through, then make your relevance easy to verify.

READING GUIDE

Inside the report

Executive summary 02
What makes a Life Moment 04
The method: CAPM 05
Reading assistant answers 06
Industry patterns 07
A moment map in practice 12
From moment to prompt 13
The brand playbook 14
Run your own moment audit 17
Glossary 18
Sources and further reading 19
See your moments 20

For marketing leaders

Start with the summary and your industry, then use the playbook to connect a moment library to content, visibility and commercial goals.

For operators

Start with CAPM. Use the prompt examples and workflow to build a repeatable baseline before changing what you publish.

02 / THE UNIT OF DEMAND

A Life Moment is not a keyword.

A Life Moment is a change in someone's circumstances that creates needs before a search: a move, a job loss, a first baby or a compliance deadline.

THE PERSON SAYS

"My crown just cracked on vacation and I am in a lot of pain. What should I do?"

Change

A crown breaks away from home.

→

Inferred need

Emergency dental care.

→

Relevant fit

A nearby practice with availability.

The story contains intent.

The person does not have to know the service category. An assistant can connect a human problem to a provider type and then a shortlist.

The constraints matter.

Timing, location, insurance and specialty change what counts as a useful answer. A broad category page may not answer the moment.

FROM SEARCH TO SITUATION

Keywords describe expressed intent. Moments describe the circumstances that create it.

03 / THE METHOD

CAPM: map, measure, then act.

Contextual AI Presence Mapping connects demand-creating situations to the brands assistants name and the work needed to improve relevance.

MAP	Define the circumstance and the need it creates.
MEASURE	Capture who each assistant names for the moment.
DIAGNOSE	Inspect answers and cited sources for gaps in relevance or proof.
ACT	Ship ranked content, entity and citation fixes.
GROW	Revisit presence and connect it to commercial goals.

How moments are defined

The industry libraries use plain-language situations, grouped by niche. Each example pairs a prompt with an inferred need, a provider or product type, and an urgency or value cue.

How priority is expressed

The Moment Map describes scoring by revenue at stake and current ownership. Industry libraries add qualitative cues such as high urgency, deadline pressure or specialist fit.

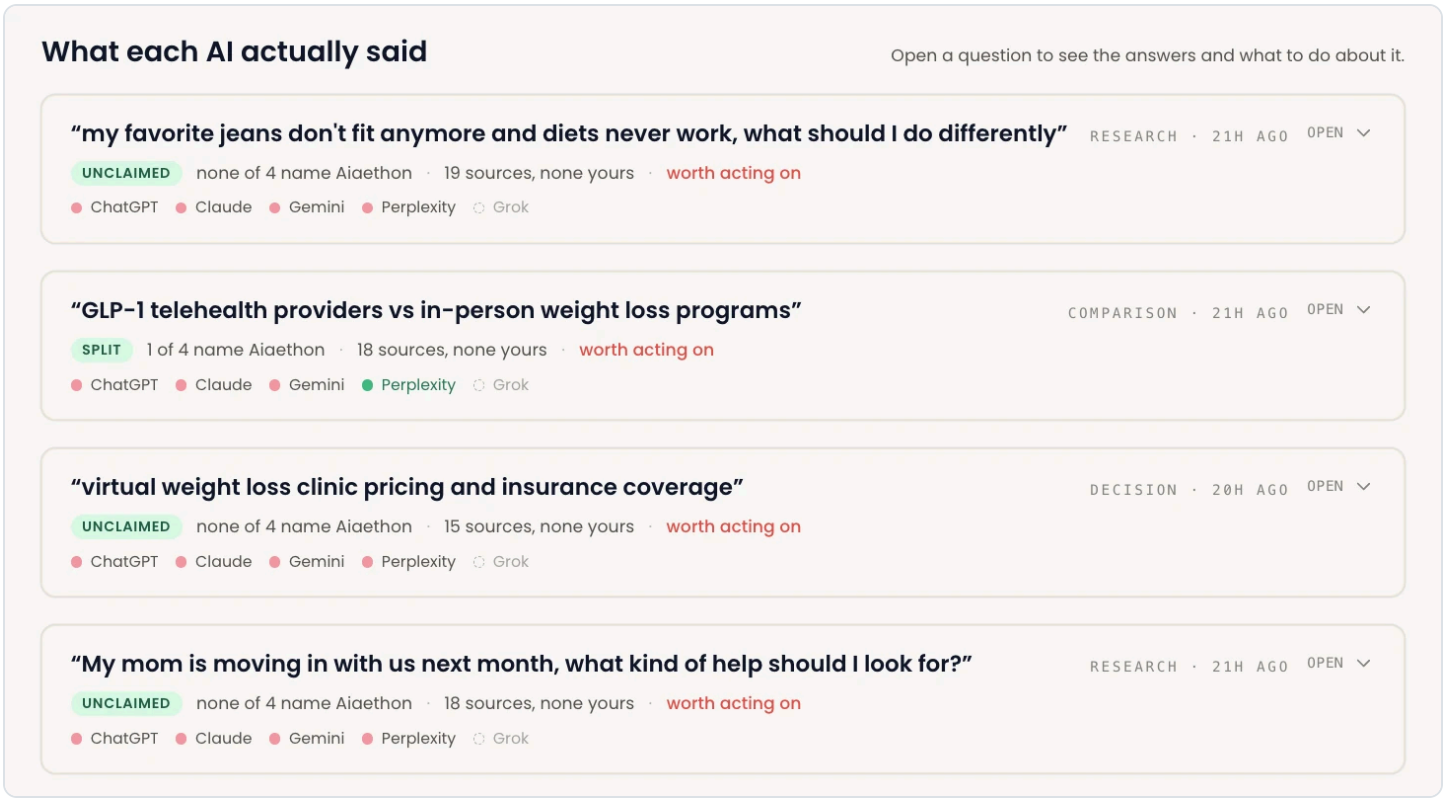
Reading the method

The public CAPM description does not publish score weights, a revenue-estimation formula or a study sampling protocol. Priority is an operational lens, not a probability of purchase. A recommendation is not proof of a sale.

04 / ASSISTANT ANSWERS

Read the answer, not just the mention.

A presence check is the beginning of a diagnosis. The useful questions are who was named, what the assistant said, and which sources supported the answer.



Aethon product view. Illustrative example.

PRESENCE

Was a brand named?

Distinguish a named recommendation from a generic category answer or an incidental mention.

CONTEXT

Was it a good fit?

Read the actual answer against the need, constraints and decision stage in the prompt.

EVIDENCE

What can you inspect?

Save the response and any visible citations. A source shown in an answer is not proof of the model's full reasoning.

Keep the comparison consistent.

Use the same moment wording across assistants. Log the date, interface and settings so a later change is easier to interpret.

05 / INDUSTRY PATTERNS

Care, counsel and coverage

Personal stakes make credentials and clear next steps especially important.

Healthcare

Care access is part of the answer.

"My crown just cracked on vacation and I am in a lot of pain. What should I do?"

Need: Emergency dental care.

Brand move: Credentials, accepted insurance, hours and booking access help make care fit legible. Keep clinical claims conservative.

Dental, mental health, med spa, chiropractic; dermatology, fertility, physical therapy and urgent care.

Explore the industry →

Legal

Process clarity reduces uncertainty.

"The other driver ran a red light and my neck still hurts a week later. Do I need a lawyer?"

Need: Personal injury consultation.

Brand move: Show practice scope, jurisdiction, confidentiality and next steps. Avoid promises about case outcomes.

Personal injury, family law, business, immigration, estate and employment.

Explore the industry →

Financial Services

Money questions arrive as life events.

"I just got equity from an acquisition and I do not know what to do with it."

Need: Liquidity and equity planning.

Brand move: Make compensation, credentials, planning process and disclosures clear. Have compliance review public claims.

Financial advisors, banking, credit, retirement, investing and tax.

Explore the industry →

Insurance

A change can expose a coverage gap.

"Just bought a used car and a dog in the same month. What coverage changes?"

Need: A multi-policy coverage review.

Brand move: Explain policy scope, exclusions, endorsements and timing. Keep product availability and jurisdiction accurate.

Auto, home, life, health, business and claims.

Explore the industry →

05 / INDUSTRY PATTERNS

Business change and better systems

Business moments begin with an operating problem, not a software category.

Professional Services

Scope is a buying signal.

"Need SOC 2 readiness without a six-month theater project."

Need: Compliance readiness.

Brand move: Publish the engagement process, deliverables and boundaries. Connect specialist capabilities to the problem being solved.

Accounting, architecture, IT, HR, design and assurance.

Explore the industry →

Consulting

The trigger is often organizational.

"Post-merger systems still do not talk and the board wants a plan by Friday."

Need: Integration and IT advisory.

Brand move: Explain the diagnostic process and practical outputs. Give leaders a clear path from problem to engagement.

Operations, strategy, technology, people, finance and risk.

Explore the industry →

SaaS & Tech

A workflow failure creates demand.

"Our CS team lives in spreadsheets and churn is creeping. What should we use?"

Need: Customer success and support tooling.

Brand move: Make integration, implementation, documentation and security information easy to find and verify.

Customer success, security, data, devtools, people operations and FinOps.

Explore the industry →

Marketing & Agencies

A stalled growth motion prompts a search.

"Product-led motion stalled and paid feels like a tax. Who should we hire?"

Need: A growth or positioning partner.

Brand move: Clarify your specialty, engagement model and fit. Tie services to the commercial problem, not just a list of channels.

Performance, brand, content, web, AI visibility and B2B.

Explore the industry →

05 / INDUSTRY PATTERNS

Making, building and buying

Fit depends on concrete capabilities, deadlines and practical constraints.

Manufacturing

Capability constraints define the shortlist.

"Short-run CNC in titanium with aerospace certs. Who can actually do this?"

Need: Precision CNC with certifications.

Brand move: Publish actual materials, processes, certifications and capacity guidance. Technical specifics are more useful than broad claims.

CNC, additive, electronics, packaging, quality and supply risk.

Explore the industry →

Construction

The deadline is part of the need.

"Water damaged the kitchen and insurance needs a timeline this week. Who do we call?"

Need: A water-damage rebuild.

Brand move: Explain licensing, local coverage, scope, timelines and the insurance coordination process where relevant.

Residential, commercial, restoration, remodeling, trades and energy.

Explore the industry →

E-commerce & Retail

Delivery can determine relevance.

"Wedding guest dress under a budget that must arrive by Friday."

Need: An occasion purchase with a deadline.

Brand move: Keep stock, delivery windows, sizing and returns accurate. Product copy should answer the shopper's situation.

Gifts, replenishment, fit, speed, sustainability and B2B supply.

Explore the industry →

Fashion & Apparel

Identity and occasion travel together.

"Interview in a conservative office but I still want to feel like myself."

Need: Interview-ready workwear.

Brand move: Make fit, sizing, styling and delivery policies clear. Organize guidance around the occasion and constraints.

Workwear, events, fit, active, sustainable and kids.

Explore the industry →

05 / INDUSTRY PATTERNS

Households, places and occasions

A change at home can ripple across several buying categories.

CPG & Packaged Foods

Household constraints shape product choice.

"Kid has a nut allergy and school lunches are impossible. What brands are safer?"

Need: Allergy-aware school lunches.

Brand move: Maintain current ingredient, allergen and label information. Never imply a product is safe beyond verified labeling.

Kids, health, sustainability, beverages, snacking and retail buyers.

Explore the industry →

Automotive

A household change can reset vehicle fit.

"My lease is up in 60 days and we need a third row. What should I look at?"

Need: A family vehicle with more space.

Brand move: Explain capacity, availability, ownership costs and finance terms accurately. Connect features to real usage.

Lease or buy, EV, service, used, finance and fleet.

Explore the industry →

Real Estate

The move has a clock and a context.

"We need a yard before kindergarten starts and our lease ends in August."

Need: A family home search.

Brand move: Show local expertise and transaction process. Keep housing guidance compliant and avoid steering.

Buyers, sellers, luxury, relocation, investors and rentals.

Explore the industry →

Restaurants & Dining

An occasion carries practical constraints.

"Anniversary tomorrow. Quiet, great wine list, no gluten. Where should we go?"

Need: Special-occasion dining.

Brand move: Keep menus, dietary handling, atmosphere, hours and booking paths current. Do not overstate allergy safeguards.

Fine dining, casual, groups, dietary, brunch and late night.

Explore the industry →

05 / INDUSTRY PATTERNS

Travel, learning and everyday support

Context makes the difference between a generic option and a useful one.

Hospitality & Travel

Trip purpose changes property fit.

"Conference next week. Quiet hotel near the venue with late checkout."

Need: A business stay near a venue.

Brand move: Make location, room configuration, Wi-Fi, quiet, checkout and policies accurate across your site and listings.

Business, leisure, family, luxury, bleisure and groups. The hospitality LinkedIn campaign adds conference-stay prompts.

Explore the industry →

Education & EdTech

A learning deadline creates urgency.

"Teen is behind in algebra and finals are in three weeks. What helps?"

Need: Tutoring with subject and timing fit.

Brand move: Explain scheduling, curriculum, instructor qualifications and realistic learning paths. Avoid guaranteed outcomes.

K-12, higher education, skills, corporate learning, test prep and language.

Explore the industry →

Family Services

Trust and logistics are inseparable.

"Both of us travel next week and grandma cannot watch the toddler alone."

Need: Backup childcare.

Brand move: Make vetting, availability, coverage and care boundaries clear. Protect the privacy of children and families.

Childcare, elder care, household help, special needs, pet care and family relocation.

Explore the industry →

Nonprofits

The action starts with a reason to help.

"I want to help local food insecurity this month with a group I can trust."

Need: A trusted local giving opportunity.

Brand move: Explain eligibility, donation use, volunteer logistics and evidence of impact. Make the next action straightforward.

Donors, volunteers, grants, crisis response, advocacy and services.

Explore the industry →

06 / A MOMENT MAP

One move. Several needs.

A single change can create demand in several categories. A moment map connects the story to a need and the evidence a relevant brand should make available.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

“We are moving with the family.”

HEALTHCARE

Find a new family dentist

Accepted insurance, pediatric services and appointment access.

REAL ESTATE

Find a home that fits the move

Local knowledge, lease timing and a clear transaction process.

FAMILY SERVICES

Coordinate care and relocation

Availability, vetting and experience with complex family logistics.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Choose a new primary bank

Fees, digital tools and the fit for household or business needs.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Build for your part of the transition, not every possible need attached to it.

Conceptual synthesis of the moving, family-care, banking and home-search examples in Aethon's industry libraries. Connections show related needs, not measured customer journeys.

07 / PROMPT LAB

Keep the situation. Make the need clear.

Useful prompts preserve the language of the person, the trigger and the constraint. They test relevance without telling the assistant which brand to choose.

NEW PARENT

“New baby. How much life insurance is enough without overbuying?”

Read for: Needs analysis, coverage explanations and a sensible next step, not a guaranteed product answer.

STARTING A BUSINESS

“I am starting an LLC with a co-founder and we disagree on IP ownership. Who should we talk to?”

Read for: Appropriate legal specialty, jurisdiction and a clear consultation path.

CARE AT HOME

“Mom had a fall. Short-term help until we figure out longer-term care.”

Read for: Care scope, access, speed and coordination, without substituting for clinical advice.

Keep a stable baseline.

Save the exact wording. If you change location, budget or urgency, treat that as a distinct prompt variant.

Read differences carefully.

A different shortlist may reflect the assistant, the wording or the moment. Repeated observations are more useful than a single answer.

Example prompts from the Insurance, Legal and Family Services libraries.

08 / BRAND PLAYBOOK

Start with the moments you can serve.

A focused library is more useful than a large list of loosely relevant questions. Begin with situations that match your actual offer, capacity and expertise.

01 Listen for the trigger.

Review anonymized intake themes, sales questions and support patterns. Write the sentence a person would say before they know the category or product name.

OUTPUT / A plain-language moment library, grouped by need.

02 Capture the starting answer.

Run consistent prompts across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity. Save named brands, provider types, visible citations and any important caveats.

OUTPUT / A dated baseline that someone else can inspect.

03 Rank the useful gaps.

Consider relevance to your offer, urgency, available proof and effort to fix. Separate a brand absence from a moment where no provider recommendation is appropriate.

OUTPUT / A short action list with a clear owner.

Do not confuse importance with volume.

A commercially important moment does not automatically have high search volume, measurable assistant traffic or a predictable conversion rate.

08 / BRAND PLAYBOOK

Publish the answer. Make the fit verifiable.

The strongest moment page helps a person make progress. It connects practical guidance to accurate evidence about what your brand can actually do.

A USEFUL MOMENT PAGE

What changed, and what should happen next?

Answer first	Address the situation directly. Explain options, boundaries and when specialist help is appropriate.
Show relevant proof	Publish credentials, capabilities, service scope, policies or product facts that substantiate your fit.
Resolve logistics	Make availability, location, eligibility, pricing terms and the next action easy to understand.
Structure for access	Use crawlable HTML, clear headings and internal links. Add appropriate structured data that matches visible content.

Fix entity contradictions.

Align your name, services, locations, hours and policies across your own site and the relevant directories.

Earn credible citations.

Improve the accuracy and completeness of reputable profiles and relevant third-party references. Relevance matters more than sheer mention volume.

08 / BRAND PLAYBOOK

Turn visibility work into a repeatable loop.

Use an action board to connect evidence to execution. Keep the moment, the proposed change and the next observation together.

DIAGNOSE

What is missing?

Moment: an urgent care question.

Gap: hours or eligibility are difficult to verify.

Evidence: saved answer and public service information.

SHIP

What will change?

Fix the service page and directory contradictions.

Assign a marketing owner and a subject-matter reviewer.

Record the publication date.

RECHECK

What happened?

Repeat the same prompt set.

Compare names, answer quality and citations.

Record uncertainty as well as improvement.

Illustrative workflow.

Keep a common record.

Log moment, prompt variant, assistant, date, named brands, visible sources, action, owner and review status. Preserve the original responses.

Use separate scoreboards.

Track recommendation presence separately from qualified inquiries and sales. Compare them over time without treating a mention as attribution.

WORK ALONGSIDE GEO AND AEO

Keep the technical and content foundations. Add the human situation, the assistant answer and a practical next move.

08 / MOMENT AUDIT WORKSHEET

Run your own moment audit.

Use a real buyer situation. Capture what each assistant says before choosing the fix. Keep a separate record for each prompt variant.

Brand / category

Date / market

What changed for the buyer?

Exact prompt, including constraints

Assistant	Brand or provider named	Visible sources / caveats
ChatGPT		
Claude		
Gemini		
Perplexity		

Choose the next useful action.

☐ The answer fits the buyer's situation.

☐ Public facts and policies are consistent.

☐ Our service or product is genuinely relevant.

☐ The proposed fix has verifiable evidence.

Gap to address / proposed change

Action owner / reviewer

Publish date / recheck date

Save the full answers, assistant settings and visible citations with the worksheet. Compare the same wording again after the work ships.

09 / SHARED LANGUAGE

Glossary

Life Moment	A change in circumstances that creates a need before a search.
Moment intelligence	Discovering demand-creating situations, measuring AI recommendations within them and acting to improve relevance.
CAPM	Contextual AI Presence Mapping. The moment-led practice of mapping, measuring and acting.
GEO	Generative Engine Optimization. Work that improves how a brand appears in generative responses.
AEO	Answer Engine Optimization. Work that makes information accessible and useful in answer experiences.
AI visibility	Whether assistants mention or recommend a brand for relevant questions.
Share of voice	How often a brand is named relative to others across a defined set of moments or prompts.
Citation	A source an assistant shows or relies on when forming an answer.
Moment Map	Aethon's view of demand-creating situations and who currently owns the recommendation.
Action Engine	Aethon's ranked work queue for content, entity and citation fixes tied to moments.

10 / SOURCES

Explore the libraries.

Definitions, published scope and industry examples are drawn from Aethon's research and resource libraries.

Life Moments Report

What are Life Moments?

What is CAPM?

Moment intelligence

Industry library

AI visibility glossary

Industry playbooks

Healthcare →

Legal →

Financial Services →

Insurance →

Professional Services →

Consulting →

SaaS & Tech →

Marketing & Agencies →

Manufacturing →

Construction →

E-commerce & Retail →

Fashion & Apparel →

CPG & Packaged Foods →

Automotive →

Real Estate →

Restaurants & Dining →

Hospitality & Travel →

Education & EdTech →

Family Services →

Nonprofits →

Hospitality LinkedIn campaign →

Using the industry patterns

Prompt examples describe situations and inferred needs. They are not a brand ranking or a forecast. Published scope figures refer to the report; the live library can expand over time.

Product image: Aethon assistant-answer view. Edition: 2026.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Be relevant when the moment happens.

See which situations create demand in your category, what assistants say and what to do next.

EXPLORE YOUR CATEGORY

See your Moment Map.

A focused walkthrough of your moments, assistant answers and the work that can improve your relevance.

Book a demo ↗

aiaethon.com/demo/

Start with a baseline.

Use the Free AI Visibility Checker to explore a few real buyer questions.

Free AI Visibility Checker ↗

aiaethon.com/free-ai-visibility-checker/

Moment intelligence.
Alongside GEO and AEO.