You ask the model to size the market, scan the competitor, or check the regulation, and back comes a clean, confident, well-formatted answer. You paste it into the deck. Three weeks later a number turns out to be invented, a "leading study" was one blog post, and a deal moved on evidence that was never there. The output was not researched. It was fluent, and fluency is now the cheapest thing an AI produces.

The standard reflex is to prompt better and trust the summary, or to abandon the tools and do it all by hand. The first ships fabrications into decisions; the second throws away the one thing AI is genuinely good at.

The Verified Research Loop keeps the speed and adds the part that was missing: structure. It introduces the TRACE framework (Target, Retrieve, Assess, Cross-check, Export), a repeatable run that turns a vague question into a decision-ready memo with every claim graded at the row level. AI accelerates collection; the loop is what turns collection into conviction.

You will learn to:

• Target the question with stakes, scope, and output format set before a single search runs.

• Retrieve across independent sources instead of trusting one confident pass.

• Assess each source by tier (primary, secondary, advocacy, anonymous) so weight follows credibility.

• Cross-check every load-bearing claim against a second source before it earns a place in your thinking.

• Export a claim ledger and a memo a co-founder or investor can act on without re-doing the work.

You stop shipping ChatGPT summaries and start producing research you can defend. Decisions rest on claims with known sources and known confidence, and the work survives the moment someone asks where the number came from.

This is not faith in the tool, and it is not doing without it. It is verification structure laid over fast collection: research you can move money on.

If you make real decisions on open-web research and refuse to bet on a claim you cannot trace, this was written for you.

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