

10 Better Ways to Talk to AI

Small-Business Prompt Playbook

Better assignments beat magic prompts.

The best AI users are not the people with the longest prompts. They are the people who know what they want to accomplish and are willing to direct the work. Use these ten patterns as a working framework, not a script.

1

GIVE AI A ROLE AND A REAL JOB

A title alone is not enough. Tell AI what the role should accomplish, for whom, and under what constraints.

Instead of: "Act as a senior marketing strategist."

Better: "Act as an experienced small-business marketing strategist. Help me develop a 90-day plan to increase qualified leads for a local service business. Assume a limited budget and prioritize tactics we can realistically execute."

2

LET AI INTERVIEW YOU FIRST

If the answer depends on information AI does not have, invite it to ask for that information before it commits to a solution.

"I want help improving our lead-generation strategy. Do not recommend a plan yet. Interview me first about our customers, offers, current channels, budget, conversion process and what we have already tried. Then tell me what information is still missing."

3

TELL AI WHERE TO MEET YOU

Tell AI what you already understand and how quickly to increase technical depth.

"I understand the basics of GA4 but I am not an analytics engineer. Explain attribution at that level. Start with the business meaning, then show me the technical details I need to make better campaign decisions."

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4**MAP THE SYSTEM, NOT JUST THE ANSWER**

Many business problems are connected systems. Ask AI to show how the pieces interact.

"Break our lead-generation process into traffic, landing page, conversion, CRM, follow-up and reporting. Explain what each component does, how they depend on one another and where a failure in one stage can affect the rest."

5**TELL AI TO CHALLENGE YOUR THINKING**

Agreement is comfortable; better decisions come from stress-testing the assumptions.

"Do not assume my plan is correct. Act as a critical reviewer. Identify the three assumptions most likely to fail, what evidence would validate them, and what alternative strategy I should consider."

6**ASK FOR MULTIPLE STRATEGIES + TRADE-OFFS**

When there is no single best answer, ask AI to build alternatives around different priorities and name what you gain and give up.

"Give me three approaches to this campaign: the fastest to launch, the most cost-conscious and the strongest long-term option. Compare expected effort, risk, measurement requirements and what we give up with each approach."

7**TURN CONVERSATIONS INTO PLAYBOOKS**

When AI helps solve a recurring problem, keep the thinking. Ask it to convert the solution into a repeatable checklist, SOP or workflow.

"Turn the process we just used into a reusable campaign-launch playbook. Include required inputs, decision points, quality checks, owner responsibilities and a final pre-launch checklist."

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8**MAKE AI CRITIQUE ITS OWN WORK**

First drafts are drafts. Give AI explicit criteria and let it grade itself before you accept the output.

"Review this landing-page copy for clarity, accuracy, relevance, persuasion and completeness. Score each category from 1 to 10. Identify the weakest sections and revise anything below 9, while preserving claims we can support."

9**PUT AI IN THE CUSTOMER'S CHAIR**

Marketing is not written for the person creating it. Ask AI to read it from the reader's point of view.

"Review this offer from the perspective of a busy small-business owner who is skeptical of marketing agencies. What would confuse them? What would they distrust? What would make them keep reading? Rewrite the weak sections without exaggerating the promise."

10**DEFINE WHAT "DONE" MEANS**

"Make it better" is vague. Success criteria let AI evaluate and refine against a clear bar.

"The final answer must be accurate, understandable to a nontechnical owner, under 800 words, include three practical examples, separate facts from assumptions and end with a five-step action plan. Review the draft against every criterion before returning the final version."

THE RELEASED SOLUTIONS PROMPTING FRAMEWORK

**ROLE → CONTEXT → QUESTIONS → OPTIONS → CHALLENGE
→ CRITERIA → REFINE → SYSTEMIZE**

You will not need every step every time. The point is a better mental model than "find the right prompt."