

The Business Owner's AI Shortcut Sheet

25 practical prompt patterns for getting better results from AI

Cheat Sheet Prompts August 4, 2026

Most people don't have an AI problem. They have a prompting problem.

A small change in how you ask AI questions can turn a mediocre answer into something genuinely useful.

This guide gives you 25 practical prompt shortcuts you can use across email, meetings, marketing, customer communication, research, and everyday business work.

WHAT YOU'LL GET

- ✓ 25 prompt shortcuts with business examples
- ✓ Copy-and-paste prompts for each one ✓ Before-and-after examples
- ✓ Common mistakes to avoid ✓ Printable quick-reference sheet

25 practical prompt patterns that help business owners get better results from ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and other AI assistants.

By Local AI | joinlocalai.com

Introduction

AI assistants are useful. But most business owners type something vague, get a mediocre answer, and assume the tool isn't that helpful.

The problem isn't the tool. It's the prompt.

A good prompt turns a generic AI response into something you can actually use - a draft you'd send, an answer you'd trust, a plan you'd follow.

This guide gives you 25 shortcuts that work across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and most other AI assistants. Each one solves a specific business problem. No technical knowledge required.

How to use this guide:

- Skim the shortcut names until you find one relevant to your work today.
- Copy the example prompt.
- Replace the bracketed sections with your details.
- Review the output and edit before using.

AI drafts. You decide.

Five Rules That Improve Almost Every Prompt

Before you learn the 25 shortcuts, these five rules will improve any prompt you write.

Rule 1: Tell the AI who it is.

Start with a role. "You are an experienced customer service manager" produces better answers than starting with your question cold.

Rule 2: Say what you want, not what you don't want.

"Write a professional 3-sentence reply" works better than "Don't write anything too long or too casual."

Rule 3: Give an example of what good looks like.

If you paste an email you've written before and say "match this tone," the AI will mirror your voice instead of guessing.

Rule 4: Set a length.

"Keep it under 100 words" or "Give me exactly 5 bullet points" prevents the AI from rambling.

Rule 5: Ask for options, not answers.

"Give me three different approaches" is almost always more useful than asking for one answer. You pick the best one.

25 Prompt Shortcuts

1 The Role Assignment

What it does: Gives the AI a specific perspective so responses are more relevant and informed. **When to use it:** At the start of any conversation where you need expert-level thinking. **Business example:** You need advice on handling a difficult employee situation but don't have an HR department. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

You are an experienced HR consultant who works with small businesses (under 50 employees). I have a situation I need help thinking through.

[Describe the situation]

What are my options? What would you recommend and why?

2 The Tone Match

What it does: Makes the AI write in your voice instead of generic corporate language. **When to use it:** Email drafts, social posts, website copy - anything that should sound like you. **Business example:** You need to send a follow-up email but want it to sound like you, not a robot. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Here are three emails I've written recently. Study my writing style - how I open emails, how formal I am, how I sign off, and how long my sentences tend to be.

[Paste 3 of your sent emails]

Now draft a follow-up email to a potential client I met at a networking event last week. The key point is: [what you want to say]. Match my tone exactly.

BEFORE

Help me write an email to a client.

AFTER

You are my email assistant. Match my writing style: direct, warm, short sentences. Draft a follow-up email to Sarah at Pinnacle Design about the proposal I sent Tuesday. Mention I can adjust the timeline. Keep it under 80 words.

Why it works: Adding role, context, a specific detail, and a length constraint turns a generic request into a useful draft.

3 The Constraint Box

What it does: Forces the AI to work within specific limits so the output is immediately usable. **When to use it:** When you need a specific format, length, or structure. **Business example:** You need a Google review response that's short enough to read on a phone screen. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

```
Write a reply to this Google review. Rules:  
- Maximum 4 sentences  
- Thank them by name  
- Reference one specific thing they mentioned  
- No exclamation marks  
- Sound like a real person, not a corporation
```

```
The review: [paste review]
```

4 The Before-and-After

What it does: Shows the AI a "before" version and tells it how to improve it. **When to use it:** Rewriting emails, proposals, bios, website copy, or any existing text. **Business example:** Your About page is outdated and sounds stiff. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

```
Here's the current About section from my website:
```

```
[Paste current text]
```

```
Rewrite it so it:
```

- Sounds warmer and more conversational
 - Leads with what we do for customers, not our history
 - Uses short sentences
 - Stays under 150 words
-

5 The Decision Helper

What it does: Lays out options with pros, cons, and a recommendation so you can decide faster. **When to use it:** When you're stuck between choices and need structured thinking. **Business example:** You're deciding between two CRM tools for your sales team. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

```
I'm deciding between [Option A] and [Option B] for my business.
```

```
My business: [brief description]
```

```
My budget: [amount]
```

```
My team size: [number]
```

```
What matters most: [your priorities]
```

```
Compare these two options. For each, give me:
```

- 3 pros
- 3 cons
- Who it's best for
- One thing most people overlook

```
Then tell me which one you'd recommend for my situation and why.
```

Better Output

These shortcuts help you get the format, length, and structure you need.

6 The Template Builder

What it does: Creates a reusable template you can fill in repeatedly. **When to use it:**

When you do the same type of writing over and over - proposals, follow-ups, onboarding messages. **Business example:** You send a similar proposal email to every new lead. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I send proposal emails to potential clients regularly. Create a reusable email template with fill-in-the-blank sections for:

- Client name
- Their specific problem
- Our proposed solution
- Timeline
- Price
- Next step

The tone should be professional but friendly. Keep it under 200 words. Mark each blank with [BRACKETS].

7 The Simplifier

What it does: Takes complex language and makes it easy to understand. **When to**

use it: Contracts, insurance documents, technical explanations, legal language.

Business example: Your insurance renewal has confusing language and you want to understand what you're actually paying for. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Explain this in plain English that a non-expert would understand. Use short sentences. If there are important details I should pay attention to, flag them.

[Paste the complex text]

8 The Objection Prep

What it does: Anticipates pushback so you can prepare responses in advance.

When to use it: Before sales calls, price increases, policy changes, or difficult conversations. **Business example:** You're raising prices by 15% and need to prepare for client reactions. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I run a [type of business]. I'm raising prices by [amount/percentage] starting [date].

What are the 5 most likely objections my customers will have? For each objection, give me:

- The objection in their words
 - Why they feel that way
 - A honest, respectful response I can use
-

9 The Checklist Generator

What it does: Creates a step-by-step checklist for any process. **When to use it:**

Onboarding, project launches, event prep, quality control, training. **Business**

example: You're onboarding a new employee and keep forgetting steps. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Create a new employee onboarding checklist for a [type of business] with [number] employees.

Include everything from before their first day through their first 30 days. Organize it by:

- Before Day 1
- Day 1
- Week 1
- First 30 Days

Keep each item as a single actionable task. No paragraphs - just checkbox items.

10 The Customer Lens

What it does: Makes the AI respond as if it were your customer, revealing blind spots. **When to use it:** Testing messaging, reviewing your website, evaluating your process. **Business example:** You want to know how your website sounds to a first-time visitor. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Pretend you are a [describe your ideal customer - age, role, situation]. You just found this website for the first time.

Read this homepage copy and tell me:

- What do you think this company does?
- Would you trust them? Why or why not?
- What questions do you still have?
- What would make you contact them or leave?

[Paste your homepage text]

Better Business Workflows

Use these shortcuts to handle everyday operations faster.

11 The SOP Writer

What it does: Turns a messy process into a clear, repeatable procedure anyone can follow. **When to use it:** Documenting how things are done so others can do them consistently. **Business example:** Your best technician handles service calls perfectly but nobody else knows his process. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I'm going to describe how we handle [process] at my business. Turn it into a clear, numbered Standard Operating Procedure that a new employee could follow.

Use simple language. Include any decision points where different situations require different steps. Format it so it could be printed and posted.

Here's how the process works: [describe the process in your own words - it's okay if it's messy]

12 The Email Sorter

What it does: Helps you triage a batch of emails by priority and suggested action.

When to use it: When your inbox is overwhelming and you need to figure out what matters first. **Business example:** You came back from vacation to 87 unread emails.

Copy-and-paste example:

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Here are the subject lines and senders from my unread emails. Sort them into three groups:

1. Reply today (time-sensitive or high-value)
2. Reply this week (important but not urgent)
3. No reply needed (newsletters, notifications, FYI)

For each "reply today" email, suggest a one-line response approach.

[Paste subject lines and senders]

13 The Meeting Prep

What it does: Prepares you for a meeting with talking points, questions, and potential outcomes. **When to use it:** Before client meetings, vendor negotiations, partnership discussions. **Business example:** You have a meeting with a potential referral partner tomorrow. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

```
I have a meeting tomorrow with [name/company] who is a [their role/business]. The purpose is [what you're hoping to discuss or achieve].
```

```
Help me prepare:
```

- 3 conversation starters
- 5 questions I should ask
- 2 things I should be ready to answer about my business
- What a good outcome looks like
- A natural way to suggest next steps at the end

BEFORE

Summarize this meeting for me.

AFTER

Here are my rough notes from today's client call with Rivera Landscaping. Summarize into: (1) decisions made, (2) open questions, (3) next steps with owners. Keep it under 150 words.

Why it works: Giving the AI structure and constraints produces a summary you can actually forward to your team.

Better Communication

These shortcuts help you write, respond, and follow up more effectively.

14 The Social Post Generator

What it does: Creates social media posts from a topic or experience without sounding generic. **When to use it:** When you know what you want to share but can't find the right words. **Business example:** Something interesting happened at work and you want to share the lesson on LinkedIn. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I want to write a LinkedIn post about something that happened in my business this week.

What happened: [describe the situation]

The lesson: [what you learned or what others can learn]

My audience: [who follows you - other business owners, potential clients, etc.]

Write 3 versions:

1. Short (3-4 sentences)
2. Story-style (opening hook, brief story, clear takeaway)
3. List format (opening line + 3-5 bullet points)

Sound like a real person sharing something useful, not a marketing post.

15 The Price Justifier

What it does: Helps you articulate the value behind your pricing. **When to use it:**

Creating proposals, updating your pricing page, responding to "that's too

expensive." **Business example:** A prospect asked why you charge more than a

competitor. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I run a [type of business]. A potential customer said our price of [your price] is higher than [competitor's price].

Here's what's included in our service that they may not be getting elsewhere:

[List what you include]

Help me write a brief, confident explanation of our pricing that focuses on value, not cost. No apologizing. No bashing the competitor. Just honest, clear reasoning. Under 100 words.

16 The Job Post Writer

What it does: Creates a job listing that attracts the right people and discourages the wrong ones. **When to use it:** Hiring for any position. **Business example:** You need to hire a part-time office manager. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Write a job posting for a [job title] at my [type of business] in [city].

Details:

- Hours: [full-time/part-time, schedule]
- Pay range: [range]
- Key responsibilities: [list 3-5 main tasks]
- Must-have skills: [list]
- Nice-to-have: [list]
- What makes this job different: [why someone would want to work here]

Write it in a warm, direct tone. Skip the corporate jargon. Make the first two sentences compelling enough that the right person keeps reading.

17 The Apology Drafter

What it does: Helps you write a genuine apology when something went wrong.

When to use it: Customer complaints, service failures, billing mistakes, missed deadlines. **Business example:** A customer's project was delivered a week late due to a supplier issue. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

A customer is upset because [what happened]. It was caused by [the actual reason]. I want to apologize sincerely and make it right.

Draft an apology message that:

- Acknowledges exactly what went wrong
- Takes responsibility without making excuses
- Explains what we're doing to prevent it from happening again
- Offers [specific remedy - discount, redo, credit, etc.]
- Keeps their confidence in our business

Tone: genuine, direct, professional. Not groveling. Under 150 words.

18 The FAQ Builder

What it does: Generates frequently asked questions and answers from your business context. **When to use it:** Building a website FAQ, training new staff, creating a customer guide. **Business example:** Your receptionist keeps answering the same 10 questions every day. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I run a [type of business]. Here's what we do: [brief description].

Generate 15 frequently asked questions that potential customers would likely ask before buying from us. For each question, write a clear, honest answer in 2-3 sentences.

Include questions about:

- Pricing and payment
 - How the process works
 - Timeline
 - What to expect
 - Common concerns
-

19 The Feedback Analyzer

What it does: Finds patterns in customer feedback so you can act on what matters.

When to use it: After collecting reviews, survey responses, or customer comments.

Business example: You have 30 Google reviews and want to know what themes come up. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Here are recent customer reviews for my business. Analyze them and tell me:

1. Top 3 things customers love (with quotes)
2. Top 3 complaints or concerns (with quotes)
3. Any patterns I should pay attention to
4. One specific thing I could improve this week based on this feedback

[Paste reviews]

BEFORE

Write a proposal for this client.

AFTER

I need a proposal for a 3-month social media management engagement for a dental practice in Phoenix. They want more Google reviews and appointment bookings. Budget: \$2,500/month. Our advantage: we specialize in healthcare. Create an outline with section headings and key points for each section.

Why it works: Specificity eliminates back-and-forth. The AI can't write a useful proposal without knowing the client, the scope, the budget, and your angle.

Better Strategy

These shortcuts help with decisions, planning, and competitive thinking.

20 The Proposal Outliner

What it does: Structures a proposal so it's clear, professional, and persuasive. **When to use it:** Before writing any proposal or quote. **Business example:** A potential client asked for a proposal for a 3-month project. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I need to write a proposal for a [type of project/service] for [client type]. Here are the details:

- What they need: [their problem or goal]
- What we'd do: [your solution]
- Timeline: [estimated duration]
- Budget range: [your pricing]
- Our advantage: [why us]

Create a proposal outline with section headings and 1-2 sentences describing what goes in each section. Keep it under one page when written out. The goal is to make it easy for them to say yes.

21 The Training Script

What it does: Turns your knowledge into a step-by-step training document. **When to**

use it: Training new hires, cross-training existing staff, documenting institutional

knowledge. **Business example:** You need to teach a new hire how to handle

incoming phone calls. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I need to create a training guide for [task or process] at my [type of business].

The trainee is [experience level]. They need to be able to do this independently after reading the guide.

Here's roughly how it works: [explain the process in your own words]

Turn this into a step-by-step training guide with:

- Overview (what this process is and why it matters)
- Prerequisites (what they need before starting)
- Numbered steps with details
- Common mistakes to avoid
- What "done right" looks like

22 The Competitor Briefing

What it does: Summarizes what a competitor does well and where you can differentiate. **When to use it:** Strategic planning, sales preparation, marketing positioning. **Business example:** A new competitor opened in your area and you want to understand their approach. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Here's information about a competitor in my market:

Their website: [URL or paste their homepage text]

Their services: [what they offer]

Their pricing: [if known]

Their audience: [who they target]

My business: [brief description of yours]

Based on this, tell me:

- What they seem to do well
 - Where they might be weak
 - 3 ways I could differentiate my business
 - What messaging I should emphasize that they're not covering
-

23 The Follow-Up Sequence

What it does: Creates a multi-touch follow-up plan so leads don't go cold. **When to use it:** After sending a quote, meeting a prospect, or losing touch with a lead.

Business example: You sent a proposal 3 days ago and haven't heard back. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

I sent a proposal to [type of client] [number] days ago for [what you proposed]. I haven't heard back.

Create a 3-message follow-up sequence:

Message 1: Friendly check-in (send now)

Message 2: Add value or new information (send in 4 days)

Message 3: Final follow-up that makes it easy to say yes or no (send in 10 days)

Each message should be under 75 words. Tone: helpful, not pushy. Include a clear next step in each message.

24 The Policy Writer

What it does: Creates a clear business policy from scratch or improves an existing one. **When to use it:** Return policies, cancellation policies, payment terms, workplace policies. **Business example:** You don't have a written cancellation policy and it's causing confusion. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Write a cancellation policy for my [type of business].

Current situation: [how you currently handle cancellations]

What I want: [what seems fair to both sides]

Any exceptions: [situations where you'd be flexible]

The policy should be:

- Clear enough that a customer understands it on first read
- Fair to both the customer and the business
- Written in friendly, plain language (not legalese)
- Under 200 words

25 The Weekly Recap

What it does: Turns scattered notes into a clear summary of what happened and what's next. **When to use it:** End of week reviews, team updates, partner reports, personal accountability. **Business example:** You want to send your business partner a quick summary of the week. **Copy-and-paste example:**

COPY & PASTE PROMPT

Here are my rough notes from this week:

[Paste your messy notes, calendar entries, or bullet points]

Turn these into a clean weekly recap with:

- What got done (3-5 bullet points)
- What's still in progress
- What needs attention next week
- One win worth celebrating
- One thing to improve

Keep it under 200 words. Tone: straightforward, no fluff.



PRIVACY NOTE

Never paste passwords, Social Security numbers, bank details, health records, or confidential client information into AI tools. Use first names only. Replace sensitive details with placeholders like [client name] or [account number]. Check your AI tool's data policy before sharing business information.

Common Mistakes

Mistake 1: Being too vague. "Help me with marketing" gives you generic advice. "Write 3 Instagram captions for a plumbing company running a summer promotion on water heater replacements" gives you something useful. **Mistake 2: Not giving**

context. The AI doesn't know your business, your customers, or your tone. The more relevant context you provide, the better the output. **Mistake 3: Accepting the first answer.** The first response is a starting point. Say "make it shorter," "try a more casual tone," or "give me a different approach." Iterate. **Mistake 4: Pasting sensitive information.** Don't paste passwords, social security numbers, bank details, or confidential client information into AI tools. Use first names only. Replace sensitive details with placeholders. **Mistake 5: Skipping the review.** AI drafts. You decide. Always read the output before sending, posting, or using it. You're responsible for the final version. **Mistake 6: Trying to learn every tool at once.** Pick one AI assistant. Learn these 25 shortcuts. Get comfortable. You can explore other tools later.

Quick-Reference Cheat Sheet

Print this page and keep it at your desk.

#	Shortcut	Use When You Need To...
1	Role Assignment	Get expert-level advice on a specific topic
2	Tone Match	Write something that sounds like you
3	Constraint Box	Get output in a specific format or length
4	Before-and-After	Improve existing text
5	Decision Helper	Choose between options
6	Template Builder	Create a reusable fill-in-the-blank template
7	Simplifier	Understand complex documents
8	Objection Prep	Prepare for pushback or tough conversations
9	Checklist Generator	Document a step-by-step process
10	Customer Lens	See your business through your customer's eyes
11	SOP Writer	Create a repeatable procedure for your team
12	Email Sorter	Prioritize a full inbox
13	Meeting Prep	Walk into any meeting prepared
14	Social Post Generator	Create social content from real experiences
15	Price Justifier	Explain your value when price is questioned

#	Shortcut	Use When You Need To...
16	Job Post Writer	Write a listing that attracts the right people
17	Apology Drafter	Respond to complaints with grace
18	FAQ Builder	Answer common questions before they're asked
19	Feedback Analyzer	Find patterns in customer reviews
20	Proposal Outliner	Structure a proposal that's easy to say yes to
21	Training Script	Turn your knowledge into a training guide
22	Competitor Briefing	Understand and differentiate from competitors
23	Follow-Up Sequence	Keep leads warm without being pushy
24	Policy Writer	Create clear, fair business policies
25	Weekly Recap	Turn messy notes into a clean summary

Remember the five rules:

- Tell the AI who it is
- Say what you want, not what you don't want
- Give an example of what good looks like
- Set a length
- Ask for options, not answers

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Free to print. Built for business owners who'd rather get things done than read about AI.*

You don't need 100 AI tools.

**You need a few prompt patterns you
actually remember to use.**

**Start with the shortcuts that solve the
work already sitting in front of you.**

Five Rules for Better AI Prompts

1. Tell the AI who it is
 2. Say what you want, not what you don't want
 3. Give an example of what good looks like
 4. Set a length
 5. Ask for options, not answers
-

Where to Go Next

The Email Prompt Pack

COMING SOON

The Meeting Notes System

COMING SOON

The Small Business AI Checklist

COMING SOON

ABOUT LOCAL AI

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