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Understand Your Goals

One of the most important generative AI skills for small business owners and operators to learn and master is the art of developing and engineering clear and comprehensive AI prompts so that ChatGPT or other AI models can give you the results you want. Good prompting is nuanced therefore we developed the GREATCITE™ prompting method.

AI Prompting 101

What is Prompting and Why it Matters

A prompt is the question or instruction you give to an AI tool like ChatGPT to get a helpful response. Think of it like giving directions to a smart assistant. The clearer you are with your directions, the better the end result.

- Brainstorm content ideas
- Write better marketing copy
- Respond to customers faster
- Craft meeting agendas
- Summarize sales/financial data
- Translate content to multiple formats
- Save time on research and admin tasks

Whether you're writing an ad, crafting an email, or asking for advice, how you compose your AI prompt matters.

GREATCITE™

Prompting Method

G - Goal: Define the purpose of the prompt.

R - Role: Give the AI a persona.

E - Example: Provide a reference, sample text, or photos to guide the style or format.

A - Audience: Clarify the target audience.

T - Tone: Define the style or mood (e.g., friendly, bold, professional).

C - Context: Describe the scene or scenario.

I - Instructions: State how the AI should structure the output.

T - Timeframe: Define the date parameters for analysis.

E - End Format: State your desired format for the final output (e.g., PDF, doc., spreadsheet, PNG, JPEG).

Want more help? You can ask ChatGPT to improve your prompts too!

Just enter "Help me rewrite this prompt to make it better."

Prompt Examples for Everyday Use

Social Media Post: “You are a seasoned marketing expert specializing in social media content for pet-related businesses. Write a fun and friendly Facebook post promoting our Summer 2025 Special Discount for our Golden Retriever grooming business located in the suburbs.

The goal is to increase appointment bookings for the seasonal promotion. The audience includes dog owners (especially Golden Retriever lovers) in suburban neighborhoods who care about high-quality, breed-specific grooming.

The tone should be playful, warm, and community-focused, appealing to pet parents who treat their pups like family.

Please include a catchy headline, engaging caption, relevant hashtags, and a clear call-to-action to book online or call. Mention the limited-time nature of the offer (valid through August 31, 2025).

Output should be formatted as social media-ready text, suitable for direct posting on Facebook.”

Customer Email: “You are a customer service communications specialist. Help me write a professional and empathetic refund response email (3–5 paragraphs) to a customer who has requested a refund after the deadline has passed.

The goal is to maintain a positive customer relationship while clearly explaining that the refund window has closed. The audience is a loyal customer who values fairness and clear communication.

The tone should be empathetic, respectful, and understanding, while also maintaining professionalism and upholding company policy.

Please include:

- A warm acknowledgment of the customer’s request.
- A clear explanation of the refund policy and why it cannot be applied.
- Alternative solutions or goodwill gestures (e.g., future discount, store credit, or helpful resource).
- A reassuring closing statement that reinforces appreciation for their business.

The timeframe context is a recent refund request made after the official deadline.

End format: Provide the email as ready-to-send professional business correspondence, with appropriate greeting, body, and closing.”

Blog Idea Brainstorm: “You are a content marketing strategist for local food businesses. Generate 10 creative blog topic ideas for a local bakery that is trying to increase in-store traffic and online orders.

The goal is to provide fresh, engaging, and relevant content ideas that resonate with our audience of busy moms who value convenience, family-friendly treats, and community connections.

The tone should be friendly, inspiring, and approachable, reflecting the bakery's warm neighborhood atmosphere.

Please focus on blog topics that:

- Highlight time-saving tips for moms.
- Showcase family-friendly recipes or bakery products.
- Emphasize seasonal specials and promotions.
- Build a sense of local community and tradition.

Timeframe context: Content should be relevant for the upcoming fall season (September–November 2025).

End format: Provide the output as a numbered list of blog topic titles with a short 1–2 sentence description for each idea.”

Product Description: “You are a professional e-commerce copywriter. Create a short, engaging product description (75–100 words) for a handcrafted scented candle that features eco-friendly soy wax, long burn time, and calming lavender fragrance. Highlight the benefits of relaxation, sustainability, and gifting appeal.

The goal is to increase product conversions by appealing to gift shoppers looking for thoughtful, high-quality presents. The audience is gift buyers of all ages, especially those seeking unique, eco-conscious, and stress-relieving items.

The tone should be warm, inviting, and persuasive, inspiring buyers to imagine how this product adds value to their lives or the recipient's.

Please include:

- A catchy opening hook.
- A description of features and benefits.
- A closing call-to-action (e.g., “Perfect for birthdays, holidays, or a little self-care.”).

Timeframe context: This description should be evergreen but also flexible for seasonal campaigns.

End format: Provide the output as ready-to-publish e-commerce product description text.”

Use our GREATCITE™ method and you'll get better answers, faster.

Rob Hickernell and Kari Maltz help entrepreneurs and small-to-medium sized businesses achieve their goals by applying innovative, contemporary marketing strategies.