

Give AI Better Instructions

Five reusable prompts for everyday business work, plus a simple way to make them your own.

A useful prompt starts with useful context

AI can help prepare a first draft, organize information, and suggest next steps. It works better when you explain the task, provide the relevant source, and show what the result should look like.

Use this five-part prompt recipe

Task: What do you want help doing?

Context: Who is it for, and why does it matter?

Source: What approved material should it work from?

Format: A table, checklist, email, or something else?

Rules: What must it preserve, avoid, or flag for review?

Before: vague request

"Write a social post about my services."

After: a brief the tool can use

"Using only the service notes below, draft three LinkedIn posts for small service-business owners. Focus on one practical problem per post. Use plain, professional language and a natural invitation to talk. Keep each under 120 words. Do not invent client results, prices, or testimonials. Mark missing facts as [CHECK]. Here are my notes: [paste approved notes]."

Before you paste information

Use public, sample, or appropriately approved material. Remove unnecessary client identifiers and sensitive details. Check your organization's rules and the tool's data settings before uploading private information. Never paste passwords or access codes.

The Sterling Desk.

COPY, ADAPT, REVIEW

Five prompts to try

Replace the bracketed instructions with your own approved material.

1 / Turn meeting notes into action

Using the notes below, prepare a decision summary and an action table with task, owner, due date, and open question. Include only decisions and assignments supported by the notes. Write "not specified" for missing owners or dates. Do not send messages or create tasks. Notes: [paste notes].

2 / Turn a process into an SOP

Organize these process notes into an SOP with purpose, required inputs, numbered steps, approval points, and completion checks. Preserve the actual process. List gaps and contradictions separately; do not invent missing steps. Notes: [paste approved process].

3 / Repurpose one piece of content

Using only this source, draft one short newsletter and three social posts for [audience]. Use [tone] and preserve the original meaning. Do not add statistics, quotes, or claims. Flag anything that needs verification. Source: [paste content you own or may reuse].

4 / Prepare a client follow-up

Draft a concise follow-up email using these facts: [facts]. Include the agreed next step and [deadline, if agreed]. Keep the tone [tone]. Do not promise additional work or invent a date. Leave gaps in brackets. Prepare a draft for review; do not send it.

5 / Find a simpler workflow

Review this workflow: [steps]. Identify duplicated work, unclear handoffs, and possible rule-based automations. For each suggestion, explain the trigger, inputs, human approval needed, and how to test it. Separate confirmed facts from assumptions. Do not assume a tool supports a feature.

The Sterling Desk.

MAKE IT REPEATABLE

A good draft still needs your judgment

Save the useful instructions, improve them against real work, and keep a person responsible for the result.

The review checklist

Facts: Check names, dates, numbers, calculations, links, and source claims.

Meaning: Confirm the draft says what you intended and preserves important context.

Voice: Remove generic phrasing and make it sound like your business.

Permissions: Check what may be shared and who approves the work.

Action: Review before publishing, sending, or updating a business record.

Connect the prompt to your SOP

Keep the approved process, template, and prompt together. State which source is current, where human approval happens, and what the tool should do when information is missing. Test the instructions on a sample task before using real business material.

One task I could try this on:

What I will check before using the result:

Want a workflow built around your business?

The Sterling Desk helps with reusable prompts, AI-connected SOPs, content workflows, and practical systems. Bring one recurring task to a discovery call and we can discuss what would help.

Book a 15-minute introduction | Book a 30-minute conversation