03

PROMPT LIBRARY · GUIDE 03

Sound Human

Clear business writing that sounds like you

Turn a stiff AI draft into clear business writing that sounds like you.

For busy small business owners. Standalone guides that complement AI Basics.

IN THIS GUIDE

- Make a short voice card from your own writing
- Edit a stiff AI draft with six practical checks
- Approve a message that keeps every fact, date and price intact

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

CRIT (Context, Role, Interview, Task) is Geoff Woods' prompt framework. We teach it in AI Basics and build on it here.

Practical guidance reviewed November 2026. Start simple and test on your own tasks. No guaranteed results.

Keep customer data private. Use placeholders or anonymized facts in an approved AI tool. Check facts, figures, promises and tone before anything leaves the business.

thelayeredfuture.com

START HERE

01

Clear is better than clever

Customers rarely care who typed the first draft. They care whether it tells them what they need and what happens next.

> START EVERY EDIT WITH TWO QUESTIONS
> *What does this reader need to know?*
> *What should they do next?*

A message that answers both sounds more human than one stuffed with friendly filler.

A NOTE ON HONESTY

This guide is about clear, honest writing in your own voice. It is not about fooling anyone. Nobody can promise a draft will pass a detector, and a natural voice is never a reason to pretend AI writing came from a personal experience or to skip a disclosure you are required to make.

> The goal: a message you would be comfortable reading out loud to the customer.

VOICE CARD PRACTICE 02

Make a small voice card

> A voice card is a short note that tells AI how your business sounds. Half a page is plenty.

- Three qualities, such as direct, calm and friendly.
- Who usually reads your messages.
- Two short samples you wrote yourself (or have permission to use), with a note on what each one shows.
- Phrases you really use and a short list of things you avoid.

A NOTE ON PRIVACY AND STYLE

Keep it about your business. Do not copy a creator's signature style. Remove private customer details before you share any sample, and update the card when your services or tone change.

MAKE AN OWNER-APPROVED VOICE CARD

Read these two examples that I wrote and have permission to use: [samples]. Describe the observable writing habits, not my personality. Make a short voice card with three tone qualities, sentence and paragraph preferences and two practical do/don't pairs. Do not add a biography or imitate a named writer. Ask me which observations fit before treating the card as approved.

EDIT

03

Six practical checks

Run these on any AI draft before it goes to a customer.

CHECK	WHAT TO DO
1. Point first	Lead with the answer or the request. Use ordinary verbs.
2. Cut the fluff	Remove empty praise, filler and claims you cannot back up.
3. Natural rhythm	Mix short and longer sentences. Use contractions where they fit. Never add mistakes on purpose.
4. Keep useful terms	Keep the words your trade needs and explain them. Giant banned-word lists can change your meaning.
5. Protect the facts	Prices, dates, qualifications and promises stay exactly as they were.
6. Nothing invented	No customer story, result or testimonial that did not happen.

> Checks 5 and 6 matter most. A clumsy sentence is easy to forgive. A wrong price is not.

BEFORE AND AFTER EXAMPLE 04

Same meaning, plainer words

> An invented scheduling update. No real customer data.

BEFORE

We are pleased to facilitate a seamless service experience. Kindly advise of your scheduling preferences.

AFTER

Which day works best for your service visit? Send two options and we will check availability.

What changed

- A clear question replaces vague language.
- Asking for two options makes the reply easy.
- "We will check availability" avoids promising a booking you have not confirmed.

EDIT A CUSTOMER MESSAGE

Help as an editor for my small business. Rewrite the draft below for [reader] who needs [purpose]. Our voice is [three qualities]. Here is one short example of our own writing: [approved sample].

Keep every factual detail, date, price and limitation unchanged. Use everyday words, short paragraphs and a clear next step. No em dashes, fake enthusiasm, invented personal experiences or extra promises. Do not add errors to make it seem human.

If an essential fact is missing or contradictory, ask me before drafting. Otherwise return one revised version under [length] words and a short list of any facts I should verify. Do not send it.

Draft: [paste anonymized text]

APPROVE PRACTICE 05

Read it aloud, then approve it

> The last check is yours. It takes about a minute.

1. Read it out loud. Would you actually say this?
2. Can the customer find the next step in five seconds?
3. Compare it to your source facts: dates, numbers and commitments.
4. Approve it, then send or publish it yourself.

> CRIT IN THIS EDIT (GEOFF WOODS' FRAMEWORK)
> *Context: the reader and the situation*
> *Role: the editor*
> *Interview: fills any gaps*
> *Task: the rewrite*

Your voice card: three qualities

Phrases we use / things we avoid

> Next step: keep your edit prompt and voice card together so you can reuse them. The Prompt Starters for Small Business give you six jobs to try them on.

If this feels like a lot, you don't have to work through it alone. We help owners and small teams build these skills step by step. Book a free 20-minute call at thelayeredfuture.com/book.