04

PROMPT LIBRARY · GUIDE 04

Prompt Starters for Small Business

Six common jobs, ready to adapt

Start six common business tasks with a practical brief you can adapt in minutes.

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

IN THIS GUIDE

- Start six weekly business jobs from a ready-made brief
- Keep customer and employee data private while you use AI
- Keep only the starters that earn their place in your week

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

Fill the blanks, then check the draft

Six starter prompts for jobs most service and trade businesses do every week.

1. Pick one job.
2. Replace every [bracketed] field with accurate information. Never leave placeholder text in a customer message.
3. Run it in an approved AI tool.
4. Check the draft, then send or use it yourself.

Each starter includes a role, context, task, limits and an output format. Where a missing fact matters, it uses the Interview step from Geoff Woods' CRIT framework so AI asks before it guesses.

> KEEP IT SAFE
>
> *Anonymize customer and employee details.*
> *Never paste passwords, payment details or sensitive records.*
> *These are drafts. Nothing here sends, posts or changes anything on its own.*

STARTER 1 PRACTICE 02

Explain a quote

> Turns your approved quote details into a short cover note. It does not estimate a job from nothing.

YOU BRING	YOU GET BACK
Approved scope, price, exclusions and next step	A subject line, a short cover note and a list of questions you still need to resolve

STARTER PROMPT

Help as a customer-service writer for my [trade] business. Draft a quote cover email using only this approved information: [scope, price, exclusions and next step]. Explain the value in plain terms without adding claims. Keep amounts and exclusions exact. Ask about any missing detail needed to avoid a misleading message. Return a subject line, a body under 120 words and a separate owner-check list. Do not calculate new prices, change terms or send anything.

Before it leaves the business

- Check the scope, arithmetic, tax treatment and validity dates yourself.

My notes: what I filled in, what I had to fix, what to change next time

STARTER 2 PRACTICE 03

Reply to a review

> A calm public reply that protects the customer's privacy and your policy.

YOU BRING	YOU GET BACK
The review with names removed, and your approved response policy	A short public reply plus a private note for you

STARTER PROMPT

Help as a customer-service editor for [business type]. Here is an anonymized public review: [review]. Our approved response policy is [policy]. Draft a calm public reply under 70 words using only facts we have approved for public use. Do not identify the customer, confirm private account details, argue, invent an investigation or promise compensation. If the policy does not cover the issue, ask me first. Add a separate private note listing what I should verify. Draft only.

Before it leaves the business

- No arguing, invented investigations, promises, refunds or admissions you have not approved.
- Make sure no private detail slipped into the public reply.

My notes: what I filled in, what I had to fix, what to change next time

STARTER 3 PRACTICE 04

Follow up without pressure

> One friendly check-in after a proposal. Not an automatic campaign.

YOU BRING	YOU GET BACK
What you sent, when, your relationship and the next step you want	One subject line and one short email

STARTER PROMPT

I run [business]. We sent [service proposal] on [date]. The contact has [brief relationship and contact permission]. Help as a customer-service writer. Draft one friendly follow-up asking whether they have questions and offering [approved next step]. No invented deadlines, discounts, guarantees or availability. If I have not confirmed they agreed to hear from us, ask me before drafting. If a key detail is missing, ask one question at a time, up to three. Return a subject line and a body under 90 words for my review. Do not send it.

Before it leaves the business

- No false deadlines, guilt, invented discounts or guessed appointments.
- Only contact people who have given you permission.

My notes: what I filled in, what I had to fix, what to change next time

STARTER 4 PRACTICE 05

Create useful local content

> One helpful post built from a question customers really ask.

YOU BRING	YOU GET BACK
A real customer question, verified service facts, the platform and your goal	One post and a simple call to action, with two alternate openings if you want them

STARTER PROMPT

Help as a content editor for a local [business type]. Customers often ask [real question]. These are our verified facts: [facts]. Write one educational post for [platform] aimed at [audience]. Explain one practical point and finish with [approved next step]. Keep it under 150 words, direct and free of hype or em dashes. Do not invent statistics, customer stories or results. Flag any claim that needs checking separately. Draft only, do not publish.

Before it leaves the business

- No made-up statistics, before-and-after stories, testimonials or platform research.
- Check any claim the draft flags.

My notes: what I filled in, what I had to fix, what to change next time

STARTER 5 PRACTICE 06

Turn a repeat job into a checklist

> Captures how a job is really done so handoffs stop dropping steps.

YOU BRING	YOU GET BACK
The real process, safety limits, who owns it and where it usually goes wrong	A checklist table with responsibilities and stop-and-ask points

STARTER PROMPT

Help as an operations planner for [business]. Turn these actual process notes into a checklist: [anonymized steps and approved safety requirements]. Ask up to three essential questions, one at a time, before drafting if a missing detail could cause a bad handoff. Use a table: step, responsible role, done when, stop and ask when. Preserve the safety requirements. Flag gaps instead of inventing a procedure. This is a draft for the process owner's review, not instructions ready for staff use.

Before it leaves the business

- The responsible person checks safety and compliance before anyone uses it.
- Treat it as a working draft until it has been tried on a real job.

My notes: what I filled in, what I had to fix, what to change next time

STARTER 6 PRACTICE 07

Review the week

> A one-page look at your numbers that keeps facts and guesses apart.

YOU BRING	YOU GET BACK
Approved weekly figures and notes, anonymized, with dates and units	Three observations, missing information and two small next steps

STARTER PROMPT

Help as a small-business operations reviewer. Here are my approved weekly figures and notes, with dates and units: [data]. Summarize three observations supported by the data. Separate facts from possible explanations. Show the source figures and calculation for each numerical comparison so I can check it. Mark missing or inconsistent data instead of guessing. Suggest two small next steps for my decision. Return a one-page summary, not financial, tax or legal advice. Take no action.

Before it leaves the business

- Recheck every calculation against the source figures.
- Treat explanations as possibilities, not facts. No forecasts it cannot support.

My notes: what I filled in, what I had to fix, what to change next time

KEEP WHAT WORKS PRACTICE 08

Keep the starters that earn their place

> Try each starter on a normal case and an awkward one before you rely on it.

STARTER	ACCURATE?	USEFUL?	OUR TONE?	EDIT TIME	KEEP?
1. Quote					
2. Review					
3. Follow-up					
4. Post					
5. Checklist					
6. Week					

Save the version you approve with the date, the AI tool you used and what you changed. Check it again after your tool or your business changes.

Go deeper

GUIDE	HELPS WHEN
The Prompt Recipe	A draft keeps missing and you want a full brief
Roles That Work	You want a better working perspective
Sound Human	The draft is right but sounds stiff

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.