
How to Use AI

A Practical Guide for Business Owners

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LET'S BE HONEST

The Reality Check

- AI is not magic. It is a tool.
- Like email in '95, websites in '05, social media in '12
- The people who **adopted early** won
- We are in that same window right now

THE GOOD STUFF

What AI Actually Does Well

- Writing and editing (emails, proposals, social posts)
- Research and summarization
- Data organization and analysis
- Filling out forms and repetitive tasks
- Answering questions about your own documents

BEING HONEST ABOUT LIMITS

What AI Does **Not** Do Well (Yet)

- Replace human judgment on important decisions
- Understand your business context without being taught
- Work reliably without someone checking its output
- Creative work that requires YOUR voice

THE ROADMAP

The 3 Levels of AI Adoption



1

Search Engine

Asking questions, getting answers. Most people stop here.



2

Assistant

Giving it context, templates, and workflows. Real time savings.



3

Team Member

Automation, agents, and systems. This is where it gets wild.

LEVEL 1

AI as a Search Engine

- ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini ... asking questions
- Good for quick answers, brainstorming, first drafts
- Problem: **garbage in, garbage out**

VAGUE PROMPT

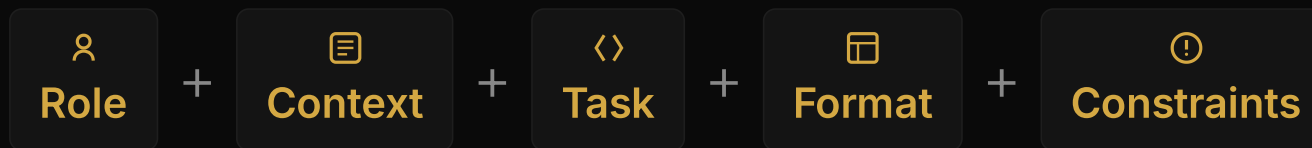
```
"Write me a professional email"
```

SPECIFIC PROMPT

```
"Write me a follow-up email to a client I met at a networking event about pool installation services. Keep it under 100 words, casual but professional."
```

THE SECRET SAUCE

The Prompt Formula



EXAMPLE

```
"You are a small business consultant. I run a pool installation company in St. Thomas, Ontario. Write me 3 social media posts about spring pool openings. Keep each under 280 characters. Friendly and local tone."
```

LEVEL 2

AI as an Assistant

- Give it your templates, your voice, your documents
- "Here is how I write emails. Now write one like me."
- Upload documents and ask questions about them
- Build **reusable prompts** for repeated tasks

This is where AI stops being a toy and starts saving you real hours every week.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Forms and Paperwork

- AI can pre-fill forms from existing documents
- Extract data from PDFs, emails, spreadsheets
- Saves hours on repetitive admin work

TRY THIS

```
"Take this client intake form and fill it out based on the email thread I'm pasting below."
```

Paste your form template + the source data. AI does the rest.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Email That Does Not Take All Day

- Draft responses in **your voice**
- Summarize long email threads
- Follow-up reminders and templates

TRY THIS

```
"Read this 15-email thread and give me the 3 action items I need to handle today."
```

Stop reading 15 emails to find the one thing that matters.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Content, Multiplied

One idea becomes five pieces of content:

- Social media posts from a single idea
- Blog posts from meeting notes
- Presentations from bullet points
- Email newsletters from blog posts
- Client proposals from phone call notes
- One piece of content, repurposed 5 ways

LEVEL 3

AI as a Team Member

This is where it gets interesting.

- Automated workflows: email comes in, AI drafts a response, you approve, it sends
- AI agents that monitor, research, and report
- Custom tools built specifically for your business

This is what I build at Obsidian AI Labs. Not the toy version. The real version.

THE PHILOSOPHY

The "Augment Yourself" Philosophy

"In an age of AI, you need to augment yourself. You need to have an AI in your corner. To keep up with everyone else."

- AI does not replace you. It **multiplies** you.
- You + AI + your expertise beats both AI alone and expertise alone
- The goal: do the hard stuff faster so you can be a person

YOUR HOMEWORK

Getting Started Today

- Sign up for **Claude** (claude.ai) or ChatGPT
- Pick one task you do every week that is repetitive
- Write a prompt template for that task
- Use it for 2 weeks. Refine it. Then add another task.
- In 30 days you will have 3-4 AI-assisted workflows

Start small. Be consistent. The compound effect is real.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Common Fears, Addressed



"It will take my job"

It will take the boring parts of your job. The parts you do not want to do anyway.



"I'm not technical"

If you can write an email, you can use AI. That is literally all it is.



"It makes stuff up"

Yes, it does. Always verify. Think of it as a smart intern, not an expert.



"It's too expensive"

Claude and ChatGPT have free tiers. Start there. Upgrade when you see the value.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Where We Go From Here

- A **hands-on workshop series** is in the works
- Real exercises, real business problems, real results
- Each session builds on the last, from Level 1 to Level 3
- This presentation is available online as a reference anytime

Online version: obsidianailabs.ca/how-to-ai.html

Thank You

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"AI and business automation, trying to make AI do the hard stuff so we can be people."