



PROMPT ENGINEERING PLAYBOOK

A practical guide for writing prompts that support business workflows without pretending prompts replace implementation discipline.

INSIDE THIS RESOURCE

- Pattern 1: Role and task
- Pattern 2: Context and source limits
- Pattern 3: Structured output
- Pattern 4: Examples



PATTERN 1: ROLE AND TASK

Pattern 1: Role and task

- Name the working role: analyst, reviewer, intake coordinator, operations lead, or another practical seat.
- State the task in one sentence.
- Include the decision the output should support.



PATTERN 2: CONTEXT AND SOURCE LIMITS

Pattern 2: Context and source limits

- Tell the model what source material it can use.
- Tell it what to ignore.
- If the answer is not in the source, require it to say so.



PATTERN 3: STRUCTURED OUTPUT

Pattern 3: Structured output

- Ask for bullets, tables, JSON fields, or a named template when downstream workflow needs consistency.
- Keep field names stable if the result will be reviewed or imported elsewhere.



PATTERN 4: EXAMPLES

Pattern 4: Examples

- Provide one or two examples of the answer shape you want.
- Include a negative example when errors are costly.
- Use examples from the workflow, not generic internet examples.



PATTERN 5: CONSTRAINTS

Pattern 5: Constraints

- Set length, audience, tone, and prohibited content.
- For regulated or sensitive work, require uncertainty flags and human-review notes.
- Avoid asking the model to make final decisions where human approval is required.



PATTERN 6: DECOMPOSITION

Pattern 6: Decomposition

- Break a complex task into extraction, classification, analysis, and draft steps.
- Test each step before combining them.
- Keep intermediate outputs visible when the workflow needs reviewability.



PATTERN 7: VERIFICATION

Pattern 7: Verification

- Ask the model to check its output against stated criteria.
- Require citations to the provided source when available.
- Require a missing-information section instead of letting gaps disappear.



PATTERN 8: HUMAN HANDOFF

Pattern 8: Human handoff

- Define when the answer can be used directly, when it needs review, and when it must be escalated.
- Prompts should support workflow judgment, not hide it.



PATTERNS 9-12: OPERATIONS + IMPLEMENTATION NOTE

Patterns 9-12: Operations

- Version important prompts the same way you version other process assets.
- Test prompts with edge cases before production use.
- Monitor for drift as source documents, policies, or customer language changes.
- Revisit prompts when the workflow changes.

Implementation note

Prompts are only one layer. Durable AI work also needs data boundaries, integration design, review paths, training, and ownership. Use this playbook to improve prompt quality, then decide whether the workflow needs a stronger implementation layer.