FREE GUIDE

AI at Work

Your practical guide – use AI safely and effectively, and communicate better while you do.

Inside: how AI really works · good prompts in five building blocks · 10 ready-to-use prompts · what never goes into an AI tool · four questions before anything goes out · why communication matters more than ever

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Why this guide?

Most people now have access to AI – very few use it well. In Germany, **57%** of companies with 20+ employees use AI, but only **3%** say they use its potential strongly (Bitkom, September 2026). Worldwide, **75%** of knowledge workers use AI at work, but only **39%** have been trained by their employer (Microsoft & LinkedIn, 2024).

The difference isn't the tool. It's knowing **which tasks AI does well**, **how to ask** for what you need, and **how to check** what comes back. This guide gives you exactly that – in 20 minutes of reading.

> **One more thing:** AI can draft the email, summarise the meeting and prepare the slides. It can't build trust, read the room or deliver your message for you. Strong AI skills with weak communication won't take you far – and great communication without AI will leave you behind. **Grow both.**

1 · How generative AI works – in plain words

- **It predicts text.** Tools like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot were trained on huge amounts of text. When you ask something, they predict the most likely next words – again and again. That's why they write so fluently.
- **Fluent isn't the same as correct.** AI doesn't "know" facts the way people do. When it has no reliable pattern, it still produces something plausible – invented sources, numbers or rules. This is called a **hallucination**.
- **It only knows what you tell it.** It doesn't know your customer, your company's rules or what happened in yesterday's meeting. The more context you give, the better the result.
- **Answers vary.** The same question can get different answers. A good prompt plus checking is a method; one lucky answer isn't.

AI IS GOOD AT	AI IS NOT RELIABLE FOR
Drafting and rewriting texts and emails	Current facts without a source
Summarising and structuring	Exact numbers and calculations without checking
Collecting ideas, preparing questions	Legal or expert decisions
Translating and adjusting the tone	Knowing your company's rules and situation

2 · Good prompts in five building blocks

BLOCK	QUESTION	EXAMPLE
Role	Who should the AI be?	"You're an experienced project manager …"
Task	What exactly should it produce?	"Write an update for my team …"
Context	Who reads it? What happened?	"… the launch moves by two weeks because a supplier is late …"
Format	How long, what shape?	"Five sentences max, with a clear next step."
Tone	How should it sound?	"Calm, honest, no blame."

Not every prompt needs all five. But when a result is bad, one of them is usually missing – most often **context**.

Follow up instead of starting over

- "Make it shorter – five sentences max."
- "Write it for someone without expert knowledge."
- "What's missing from your answer?"
- "What assumptions did you make?"
- "Give me three versions with a different tone."
- "Ask me questions before you write."

> **The most useful habit:** before a bigger task, write *"Before you start, ask me up to five questions about what you need to know to do this well."* You'll get better results – and learn which context matters.

3 · 10 prompts you can use tomorrow

Replace the [brackets]. Never paste personal or confidential data into tools your company hasn't approved.

1 · Rewrite an email

```
Rewrite this email so it's clear, friendly and no longer than [120] words. The reader is [a long-standing customer]. Keep all facts unchanged and end with a clear request. Email: [paste text without names]
```

2 · Meeting notes → tasks

```
From these meeting notes, create: a three-sentence summary, a table with task, owner and deadline, and a list of open questions. Don't invent names or dates – write "open" if something is missing. Notes: [paste]
```

3 · Summarise a long document

```
Summarise this document for [my manager, who has two minutes]: the five most important points, any decisions needed, and risks. Quote the original wording for every number. Document: [paste or attach]
```

4 · Prepare a difficult conversation

```
I need to tell [a colleague] that [their part of the project is late]. Help me prepare: a calm opening sentence, three questions to understand their view, and a way to agree on next steps. Tone: respectful and direct.
```

5 · Structure a presentation

```
I'm presenting [topic] to [audience] in [10] minutes. Suggest a structure with one key message per slide, a strong opening sentence and a closing call to action. Ask me questions first if you need more context.
```

6 · Make it simple

```
Explain [this technical text / topic] so that someone without expert knowledge understands it in one minute. Use one everyday example. Then list what I should double-check for accuracy.
```

7 · Answer a customer inquiry

```
Draft a reply to this customer question: [question, without personal data]. Our relevant information: [facts, prices, rules]. Use only these facts – if something is missing, put [CHECK] in the text instead of guessing.
```

8 · Get feedback on your own text

```
Act as a critical reader from [my target group]. Read my text and tell me: what's unclear, what's too long, and what would make you stop reading. Don't rewrite it – give me three concrete suggestions. Text: [paste]
```

9 · Prepare for a meeting in English

```
I have a meeting in English about [topic] with [international colleagues]. Give me ten useful phrases for [presenting my view politely, disagreeing, asking for clarification], each with a short example sentence.
```

10 · Check your own result

```
Check this text for factual claims, numbers, names and dates that I should verify before sending it. List each one with why it might be wrong. Text: [paste]
```

4 · Working safely

TRAFFIC LIGHT	WHAT MAY GO INTO AN AI TOOL?
Green – yes	Public information, your own wording, anonymised examples
Amber – company tool only	Internal, non-confidential content – only in the tool your company approved, with a company account
Red – no	Personal data, customer data, trade secrets, passwords

Good to know: business versions such as Microsoft 365 Copilot with a work account or ChatGPT Business/Enterprise don't use your data to train their models by default. In free personal versions this is often on by default – in ChatGPT you can switch it off under Settings › Data Controls. Your company's AI policy always comes first.

> **Before anything goes out – four questions:**
> 1. Are the facts and numbers right? · 2. Are names, dates and deadlines correct? · 3. Does the tone fit the reader? · 4. **Would I sign this with my own name?**

Three real cases to remember

- **The invented court cases (USA, 2023):** a New York lawyer cited six court decisions from ChatGPT in a filing – none of them existed. The court fined the lawyers and their firm $5,000. *Lesson: check every source.*
- **The chatbot's refund rule (Canada, 2024):** Air Canada's website chatbot told a grieving customer he could claim a bereavement discount after his flight – wrong. The tribunal held the airline responsible for what its chatbot said. *Lesson: you're responsible for what goes out under your name.*
- **Confidential code in ChatGPT (Samsung, 2023):** engineers pasted confidential source code and meeting notes into ChatGPT to work faster. Samsung then restricted generative AI tools for staff. *Lesson: clear rules beat good intentions.*

For companies: the EU AI Act

Since 2 February 2025, companies in the EU that use AI have had to take measures for their staff's AI literacy (Article 4, Regulation (EU) 2024/1689). Since July 2026 the wording is: take measures to **support the development** of AI literacy – suited to people's knowledge, experience and use of AI. Training with documented participation is such a measure. *This is not legal advice.*

5 · Which of your tasks suit AI?

The best candidates are **frequent** (several times a week), **text-heavy** (writing, reading, summarising), **checkable** (you can tell if the result is right) and **low-risk** (no sensitive data – or an approved tool).

A study with 758 consultants of the Boston Consulting Group showed both sides: on tasks that suit AI, those using it finished more tasks, faster and with higher quality – on a task outside AI's strengths, they were **less often correct** than colleagues without AI. Knowing the difference is the skill.

MY TASK	MINUTES TODAY	MINUTES WITH AI (INCL. CHECKING)

6 · AI can't communicate for you – three tips

- **Say the point first.** In meetings, start with the one sentence you want people to remember, then explain. AI can draft the content – the clarity of your message is yours.
- **Ask before you answer.** Just as a good prompt gives context, good conversations start with questions: "What's most important for you here?" It saves time and builds trust.
- **Own the delivery.** Read every AI draft out loud before you send or present it. If it doesn't sound like you, change it – people trust a voice, not a template.

7 · Your next two weeks

1. Pick **one** task from section 5.
2. Do it **five times** with AI – and check every time.
3. Note the minutes before and after.
4. Share your best prompt with one colleague.

About me

I'm David Nawee – AI trainer and communication coach in Hannover, Germany. I grew up in the US, learned German as an adult, and use AI every day: I built the free English learning platform **nawee.net** and my own work tools with it. I help people and teams use AI effectively *and* communicate with clarity and confidence – in German or English.

> **Want more?**
> · **Hands-on workshop "AI at Work"** for your team – on site in Hannover or online: nawee.net/ki-schulung-hannover.html
> · **Free 15-minute call:** cal.com/nawee/15min
> · **Weekly tips** on AI and communication: my LinkedIn newsletter "Smart Tools, Strong Voice"

Sources: Bitkom (14 Sept 2026), "Erstmals nutzt die Mehrheit der Unternehmen KI" · Microsoft & LinkedIn, 2024 Work Trend Index · Dell'Acqua, McFowland, Mollick et al., "Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier", Organization Science · Mata v. Avianca (S.D.N.Y. 2023) · Moffatt v. Air Canada, 2024 BCCRT 149 · Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 and (EU) 2026/1744 · Microsoft and OpenAI privacy documentation. Version October 2026 – AI changes fast; check your tools' current settings. © David Nawee · nawee.net · Free to share unchanged.