SMARTER AUTOMATION

SMARTER PROMPTS GUIDE

Introduction

Congratulations are in order. Why? Well you've discovered the rapidly advancing world of AI with the wonderfully efficient and multi-talented new tool on the block, ChatGPT. You're already ahead of the game!

But now what?

Most people don't really go beyond simply playing around with ChatGPT. Others may figure out some great uses of it, but find they have to continually argue with this obtuse-seeming chatbot to get what they're really looking for. And others may consistently get closer to what they're really looking for, but miss many of the potential uses of it and tactics to get even better output.

Few people will ever reach the point of understanding the many different ways ChatGPT could be used to bolster their business **and** knowing the various ways to get optimal output from it. Those who do get significantly more value out of it than everyone else.

Although we cover prompts in the "Smarter Business with ChatGPT" workshop, we feel that prompt engineering (the science of constructing prompts) is so important, we wanted to go over it in more depth. Our goal with this guide is for you to give you what you need to develop the single most important skill when it comes to ChatGPT: writing better prompts.

We hope that you find this guide beneficial. Feel free to provide us with feedback on how we can make future editions of this guide more helpful.

The Basics of Prompts

Let's get started by looking at the basics of prompts!

What Are Prompts?

Prompts are simply the input that you provide to an AI tool in order to get a desired result from it. It can take many different forms, which we'll cover in this guide, but at the heart of it, prompts given to an AI tool mimic questions or requests given to a human worker.

Prompts Transcend AI

At the heart of it, the skill of writing better prompts (prompt engineering) is asking better questions or making more detailed requests.

Imagine you just hired someone new to be your assistant. They've gotten no training yet, and don't really know your business or processes very well. How would you go about requesting them to, for instance, write an email to your customers letting them know of a new product being launched?

We'd all like to think we'd give them abundant details on what they need to know and spell out the full process we'd like them to go through. In the real world, details often get missed, and the resulting work often ends up worse than expected.

This is what tends to happen when most people use ChatGPT. It may **seem** like an amazing tool, but not an amazingly **valuable** tool to those people.

They may even believe AI-generated content is simply worse than human-generated content because they themselves didn't give enough detail to ChatGPT to provide a good output, and they deduce that ChatGPT can't make good content because they couldn't make good content with it.

The truth is, if they gave the same request to a human, they wouldn't get good results either. It's not the fault of the one making the content but rather the one making the request when this happens.

That also means that learning how to make good prompts will also help you get better output from anyone on your team you give work directly to. And with AI growing in usage and capabilities by leaps and bounds, it's simply a skill that will only continue to skyrocket in value.

The biggest tech companies have already been paying big money for the best prompt engineers. Learn from this guide how to make smarter prompts and you won't have to do the same!

Types of Prompts

In the "Smarter Business with ChatGPT" workshop, we went over the 4 different types of prompts. We'll be covering them in more detail here along with providing you with some examples.

1. Basic/Broad Prompts

A basic or broad prompt is just a simple question or request without much if any additional detail given.

On the surface, it may seem best to avoid ever giving basic or broad prompts, since more detail should always be better, right? But sometimes you may not always have more details to give, or to specifically know what you want.

What can often make simpler prompts more effective is to ask for a specific number of what you're looking for, such as 10.

Imagine for instance if you were asking a graphic designer to create a logo for your business, but you didn't really know how you'd want it to look and only really had the business name and a basic premise of it.

If you ask them for just one logo, you'll be left hoping it'll be right and losing time if it's not. Instead, you'd want to ask them for several logo possibilities so that even if none were right, you'll likely have at least one option that is in the direction of what you want and can expand on that direction.

This is the best way to consider asking ChatGPT for ideas or examples. If any of the ideas or examples you get back are in line with what you were thinking, you can indicate liking that one and having it provide additional ideas/examples similar to that.

Examples:

- Provide 10 available domain names for a nutrition store
- Provide 10 business ideas for a mobile app that helps people reach their goals
- Give 10 rebuttals I might get on a sales call for a high-ticket product

You can see that there is **some** detail given, but for each of these, it's the bare minimum you could give to possibly get the result you're looking for.

2. Descriptive/Specific Prompts

While basic or broad prompts leave ChatGPT wide open to produce a varied answer, descriptive or specific prompts add additional context or details that helps the possible response be within certain bounds of what you're looking for.

Generally, unless you don't know what you want or want more variety within the response, you'll want to give a more descriptive or specific prompt whenever you can. It's rare that providing more detail ever hurts the output.

The question tends to be how much detail to provide. That's ultimately up to you and how much time you want to spend to get the desired result and how serious the need is for the result to be correct to your situation.

If for example you're turning to ChatGPT for advice on an important business decision, that would certainly call for providing a lot more context and detail than if you simply want recommendations for restaurants to eat at.

Additionally, if it's a request you'll be making a lot, taking the extra time the first time to really try to make the prompt as detailed and effective as possible will definitely be worth it.

Examples:

- I want to build an online nutrition store that will be specializing in natural supplements and serve men and women age 35-55 who shy away from supplements because they're skeptical of putting anything relatively unknown in their body. Provide 10 available domain names for this store that would evoke high trust and authority to this audience and be no more than 2 words long.
- I will be developing a mobile app that helps people reach their weight loss goals and overcome failed New Year's Resolutions. What are 10 possible ways to monetize this app in a way that wouldn't abuse people's trust?
- I sell a group coaching program for $5,000, and I get on lots of calls with people to sell them on this program, but have not gotten many sales yet. Each person is pre-qualified with the ad and they only find out the product price on the call. I want those people to be excited to join and not give many if any suggestions on improvements. What rebuttals would I be facing on a sales call. and how should I respond to each?

These are expanding beyond the basic/broad prompts earlier in a way to get closer to the answer right from the start vs. having a highly iterative process that may require a lot of back and forth.

3. Prompt Follow-ups/Series

If a single prompt can be powerful, what about multiple prompts tied together?

There's a fundamental benefit to having multiple prompts in a single chat instance: ChatGPT remembers the entire past conversion in a chat instance. Having a bit of back and forth is sometimes an easy way to ultimately get at what you want.

Additionally, if you're providing a lot of background and context to ChatGPT for a request you want to ask it, it may be best to provide that information in its own prompt and have ChatGPT acknowledge it before proceeding to the request, effectively making it a series of prompts.

Here are some examples of how this could play out using earlier example prompts:

1. Nutrition store domain ideas: avoid certain words
    a. Initial prompt: Provide 10 available domain names for a nutrition store
    b. Follow-up prompt: Provide 10 additional available domain names but exclude domains with the keywords Nutrition and Diet.

2. Motivational mobile app: flesh out further
    a. Initial prompt: I will be developing a mobile app that helps people reach their weight loss goals and overcome failed New Year's Resolutions. What are 10 possible ways to monetize this app in a way that wouldn't abuse people's trust?
    b. Follow-up prompt:What steps would I take to implement the first monetization way you mentioned?

3. Group coaching sales call: providing additional context
    a. Initial prompt: Give 10 rebuttals I might get on a sales call for a high-ticket product
    b. Follow-up prompt: Imagine I'm speaking with a busy mother who is always very busy taking care of her children. *Describe your offer more* What would be the most likely rebuttals I may hear from her on a sales call?

If the follow-up is to help refine an output that wasn't what you wanted, don't fret unless you've gone through multiple follow-ups and the output is still far off. If that's the case, you may be better off starting a new chat and trying a refined request right at the start.

4. Role Prompts

Want to emulate asking a top expert in a field for advice? You can do that with role prompts.

ChatGPT has a very expansive set of data it uses to draw upon for answering your prompts. One way to help ensure it's using the best data from it is by having it pretend to be the type of person you would give your request to if you were asking a person.

Most of the time, this involves having it pretend to be an expert in the field of your request, i.e. a medical doctor if you want to know based on symptoms you're experiencing what potential issues you may have.

Other times, you may want a certain perspective that might not be an expert you'd seek advice from, but rather someone you might otherwise survey for vital information. An example of this is if you have a defined customer avatar, having ChatGPT act as that avatar and then ask questions to figure out that perspective related to what you offer.

Another neat way to use this is to set up a role-playing scenario. If you had an interview lined up with one of the top tech companies to work there, you might want ChatGPT to act as an interviewer from that company and provide some other context and then play out how an interview might go.

Examples:

- Act as a top nutritionist. What supplements would you recommend to men and women aged 35-55 to improve their general health and give them energy and vitality?

- Pretend you are a world class motivational speaker. If you were to give a motivational speech and then recommend a mobile app to the audience to go along with the motivational advice you gave during the speech, what benefits and features would that app need to have to be most effective combined with your advice to help your audience reach their goals and achieve happiness?

- Here is how I would describe my ideal customer avatar: *add description*. Act as this person. I've just described to you my $5,000 6-week group coaching program that helps them launch their personal brand, build an audience for it and figure out the right products and services to offer. I've just finished describing this program to them including *list of benefits* and that they get *list of features*. Please continue the conversation as if you were apprehensive about making the purchase and had some rebuttals that needed to be addressed.

It's easy to see how this can be powerful to get perspectives from many different types of people in one place and for no cost.

5. Prompt Frameworks

Just like you can define a role for ChatGPT, you can define a set of circumstances or items pertinent to your request through a prompt framework.

Prompt frameworks can be simple or vastly complex. They can be used for basic purposes like having a way to shorthand big pieces of information or pertinent lists of items, or advanced purposes like evaluation or scoring.

The idea is before you ask what will ultimately be your request, you lay out a number of variables with their values.

Example:

- Initial prompt: "Set {Location} to 'San Diego, CA, USA' and set {Favorite Foods} to 'Mexican, Italian and Chinese'."
- Request prompt: "Find the 5 best reviewed restaurants in {Location} that serve {Favorite Foods}."
- Change prompt example: "Change {Location} to 'Phoenix, AZ, USA' and resubmit my last request"

Using {} around the variable name helps ensure ChatGPT doesn't confuse variable words with being part of the sentence otherwise, and make it easier for you to see them in the prompts as well.

The ease of changing variables without confusing ChatGPT is what can make this especially useful for having a chat instance that might have ever-changing context, if the context will stay the same but your requests involve a number of variables that would change each time.

The latter is where scoring/evaluation might come into play.

Example scoring framework:

- Initial prompt: Define {High Potential Audience} and {Low Competition} as variables that will be valued on a 1-10 scale with 10 being yes and 1 being no. When a business idea is provided, please evaluate whether the business idea has a high potential audience and set the {High Potential Audience} variable accordingly, then evaluate whether the business idea would have low competition and set the {Low Competition} variable accordingly, and then tell me the {High Potential Audience} value followed by the {Low Competition} value after you have set them for the business idea.
- Request prompt: New business idea: Selling t-shirts online

If there's a scoring framework you've heard of that you like and want to use, consider setting up a chat instance dedicated to it and set the variables needed, and you have a chat you can always turn to to use that scoring framework moving forward.

Since different prompt types can be mixed together, it's pretty easy to see how a prompt or series of prompts can become very complex. It's important to understand that providing too much context or information can sometimes have diminishing returns or even confuse ChatGPT.

If you are providing lots of upfront information and then find that ChatGPT is generating irrelevant or off-topic output, try providing less context or breaking down your request into smaller, more specific prompts and that may do the trick.

Asking ChatGPT for Prompt Guidance

One of the brilliant things about ChatGPT is it's very hard to hit a stopping point with it where it feels like no progress can be made. Why? Because you can always ask ChatGPT how to get past the stopping point!

The best way to use this tactic is to ask ChatGPT if you asked it a particular request, what context should be provided to get the best output. That can often help you realize some details you might not have provided otherwise that are actually important.

Another way is to provide the exact prompt you were going to use, say what your ultimate objective is and ask ChatGPT how it would improve the prompt.

Lastly, if you're just flat out not sure what to ask, you can just directly ask ChatGPT to craft a prompt for you to get X outcome, and it may then ask you follow-up questions to create it.

General Purposes of Prompts

Beyond the fact that ChatGPT is designed to give you the output you're requesting it to, it's important to understand the distinct general purposes you could have for prompts and how you'd approach them differently.

1. Writing / Content Creation

To many ChatGPT users, this is the only purpose they're aware of for ChatGPT. That's how popular this use of ChatGPT has become. This can involve writing blog posts, social media posts, email newsletters, ad copy, website copy and much more.

By the nature of the dataset ChatGPT draws from, basic/broad prompts for writing will result in very generic-sounding writing, which will not provide a good experience for the reader.

Most users of ChatGPT are simply happy to get writing off their plate, and they take what's given and end up either keeping it as-is and very stoic and machine-like, or they end up taking nearly as much time to tweak it as if they simply wrote it themselves. Thankfully, there's a better way!

Writing In Your Unique Voice

If AI wasn't trainable, it wouldn't be nearly as effective and amazing as it is, and the ability to train ChatGPT to write in your voice is a perfect illustration of that.

You can follow one of two processes to start getting ChatGPT to write in your voice.

1. Give 3 lengthy examples, have it acknowledge receiving each, then ask it moving forward to use these examples as a style guide for all its future writing in that chat instance.
2. Give 3 lengthy examples, have it acknowledge receiving each, then ask it to describe the writing style in great detail, and you can then use that output in future chat instances to get it to write in your style

The 2nd process is generally best so you can have a concise accurate description of your writing you can do to more easily generate writing in your voice moving forward.

Note that with the format you are writing in, if there are particular things you want to make sure are done each time, like a particular greeting or sign-off in a newsletter, you may need to instruct ChatGPT specifically to use those if your writing samples don't always include them.

If you plan on using ChatGPT a lot for writing, you can consider having different chat instances for blog posts, social posts, email newsletters and ads, and for each, providing samples specific to that format so that the output will work best for the format.

Otherwise Humanizing the Voice

With ChatGPT having specific patterns that clearly set its writing style apart from more human writing, certain tactics can help get it to generate more humanized writing.

Those tactics include:

1. To counteract the machine-like consistent sentence and paragraph lengths: "Rewrite this with human perplexity and burstiness."
2. To make the text simpler for anyone to understand: "Rewrite this so that a 5th grader could understand it."
3. To emulate the choppier writing more typical of modern blog/social posts: "Rewrite with paragraphs 1-2 sentences long that are each no more than 12 words long."
4. To make social posts more natural looking and sounding for social: "Rewrite in a more casual and relaxed tone, include a couple modern slang words or phrases, and include a couple emojis to illustrate some of the ideas and emotions"

Understanding these methods for improving ChatGPT's writing output will easily set you apart from most ChatGPT users and allow you to avoid spending far too much time fixing what it gives you.

2. Communication / Support

While similar to content creation, it's important to understand that communicating directly with someone has its own nuances. It's not just about writing in your own style, but each situation may have a need for a certain tone.

Thankfully, ChatGPT is excellent at understanding this and simply giving it the context of the situation and the outcome you want can help guide it to give you the best output.

Example: *Provide email chain* "Write a response in a cordial tone indicating that I would like to decline moving forward."

3. Idea Generation

ChatGPT is an excellent source of ideas when you get stuck with a blank slate or want to bolster the ideas you've already come up with.

Note that the more basic/broad you are with the prompt you give, the bigger variety of ideas you'll receive, which can be beneficial sometimes if you want to avoid a narrow box of ideas, but if you have a particular direction in mind already, you'll want to give more context and detail to ensure the ideas you get back will fit.

4. Research

While Google has been the de facto research tool for many years now, it's likely going to get unseated by AI if it's not careful! ChatGPT makes it significantly easier to get answers you need for what you're researching.

The most important thing to remember on the research site is that the data doesn't go later than September 2021, and otherwise ChatGPT may sometimes confidently return information that is incorrect, so you'll want to separately verify the output you receive.

5. Strategy

With many other uses of ChatGPT being replacing busy work, strategy is an interesting purpose for it, as you're able to get highly valuable output that you'd normally have to pay a lot of money for.

The best way to get the best strategic output is to use a role prompt to get ChatGPT to act like the type of expert you'd otherwise want to talk to to get the advice you need. Then otherwise describe yourself/your business, the situation and the outcome you're looking for to get the best output.

6. Planning & Processes

One of the most loathed tasks for most business owners, planning & process mapping are each super easy to get created by ChatGPT. This can range from creating a general business plan to creating SOPs to plans for what roles to hire for.

Providing ample context is key in this situation to help ensure it's giving a plan or process that will fit your need. If you need a very details plan or process, have it start more broadly at first and then step by step, have it drill down further and create lists for each initial broad step.

7. Evaluation & Analysis

Something machines have always excelled at vs. humans is taking in big chunks of data and evaluating or analyzing it. Especially for anyone not used to doing this themselves, this can be an enormous benefit that helps ensure data gets properly used and not simply ignored.

The trick with this is first to feed in the data, have it acknowledge receipt and then be descriptive in how you want it to work with the data and the ultimate goal of what you want. If there are any bounds by which you want to make sure it's evaluating the data, using a prompt framework will help ensure it's giving you the output you want.

8. Translation

We've all known that simply using Google Translate doesn't get very great natural sounding translation of text, but ChatGPT on the other hand is significantly better at doing that.

What's great about it is you can use similar tactics for humanizing writing on translated text to have it include things like slang, be cordial or formal, and other things that you'd never be able to do otherwise on your own.

The one caveat to know is that some lesser-used languages it may be hit or miss on as far as making the output sound great in that language, but for the most common languages, it's as simple as giving it the text you want translated and then asking it to translate it.

9. Coding

Coding has been an unexpected gem of a use for ChatGPT that has set it apart from many other AI tools. It's not really at a point yet for non-techies to be able to start coding like a pro, but it can sometimes come through in a pinch especially for troubleshooting and fixing code that has issues.

The biggest challenge with using it to generate or fix code is that the code libraries it has access to are all from September 2021 and before. Once GPT-4 comes it, it will likely be significantly better for coding purposes, but as of now, it can be problematic to use for that reason.

10. Image Generation (via AI Image Prompt Generation)

While ChatGPT itself can't generate images, it can generate excellent prompts to give other tools like Midjourney and DALL-E to generate the images you need.

The 4 items needed to generate good AI image prompts are:

- Content type (drawing, painting, etc.)
- Description of what is in the image
- Style (which artist it's in the style of or any other styling notes)
- Composition

If there's any component you're not sure of, you can keep it broad and get multiple different prompts to try for it.

What to Do When You're Stuck

Sometimes, it might feel like whatever you give ChatGPT for something, you're not quite getting back what you want. This can especially happen if it gives incorrect output a couple times and you find yourself arguing back and forth with it trying to fix it.

Whenever that happens, the best thing to do is give up in that specific chat instance and start fresh in a new one. Use any progress you have made to make a better first prompt, and then keep trying to refine it until you get what you want.

If you find yourself drawing a blank on what to prompt it with to get what you want, you can either ask it to generate prompt ideas for you for the outcome you're looking for, or otherwise say what outcome you want, and ask it what it would need to give you the best output.

The main thing to remember is don't feel like you've failed if it doesn't give you back usable output the first time through. As you use ChatGPT more, you'll get better at giving it prompts that will be fruitful, and before long, you'll be wielding it like a wizard!