

The Owner's AI Toolkit

River Digital Staffing

The plug-and-play AI kit for busy local business owners. Copy-and-paste prompts for the jobs you repeat every week, plus a straight-talk guide to which tools are actually worth your time. Built for owners in the Rio Grande Valley who run the business, not a tech department.

What this is

You already know AI can save you time. The problem is the blank box. You open ChatGPT or Claude, you stare at it, and you are not sure what to type or which tool to even use.

This kit fixes that. Two things, in one place:

1. **The Prompt Library.** Ready-to-use prompts for the work every small team repeats: customer replies, quotes, follow-up, reviews, hiring, social posts, and the paperwork you hate. Copy, paste, fill in the blanks, send.
2. **The Tool Cheat Sheet.** For each common job, the one tool we would pick, one honest backup, what it costs, and how long it takes to set up. No twenty-app rabbit holes.

You do not need to read this front to back. Go to the Fast Start on the next page, get one win today, and come back for the rest when you need it.

How to use this kit

1. Open a free AI assistant. Our two picks are **ChatGPT** (chatgpt.com) and **Claude** (claude.ai). Both have a free plan. Pick one and stick with it for a week.
2. Find the prompt for the job in front of you. Copy the whole thing.
3. Paste it into the assistant, then replace anything in **[BRACKETS]** with your own details.
4. Read what it gives you. If it is close but not right, just tell it in plain words: "make it shorter," "sound more like me," "in Spanish too." It will fix it.

The one rule that matters: the more you tell it, the better the answer. Treat the AI like a sharp new assistant on their first day. They are smart, but they only know what you hand them. Paste in the real email, the real price, the real customer name. Do not make it guess.

FAST START: get one win in the next 15 minutes

Do not try to "learn AI." Just knock out one real task right now. Pick the one that stings the most this week.

- **Buried in your inbox?** Go to Prompt 27 (Triage my inbox) and Prompt 1 (Reply in your voice). Clear five emails in ten minutes.
- **Owe someone a quote?** Go to Prompt 8 (Rough notes into a clean quote). Paste your scribbles, get a clean quote back.
- **Chasing money?** Go to Prompt 12 (Chase a late payment). Send it before you finish your coffee.
- **Need reviews?** Go to Prompt 13 (Ask for a review). Send it to your last three happy customers.
- **Behind on social?** Go to Prompt 19 (One idea into a week of posts). Get five posts from one thought.

Pick one. Do it now. That is the whole game: one repeated task, off your plate, today. Then tomorrow, do the next one.

Owner tip for the Valley: most of your customers text, and many switch between English and Spanish. Every prompt in here can be run in both. Just add "give me an English version and a Spanish version" to the end, or use the bilingual prompts in Section 8.

PART ONE: THE PROMPT LIBRARY

40 prompts, grouped by the part of your day they save. Numbers are stable so the Fast Start and Cheat Sheet can point to them.

Section 1: Email and customer replies

1. Reply to a customer email in your voice

Reply to the email below in a warm, professional tone that sounds like a real small business owner, not a big corporation. Keep it under 120 words, get to the point, and end with one clear next step. Do not use fancy words I would never say out loud.

Email: [PASTE THE EMAIL]

What I want to say back: [YOUR ROUGH NOTES]

2. Reply to a rambling message

Here is a long, messy message from a customer. First, tell me in 3 bullets what they are actually asking for. Then write a short, friendly reply that answers each point. If anything is unclear, list one or two questions I should ask them.
Message: [PASTE MESSAGE]

3. Say no without burning the bridge

Write a polite, professional reply that turns down the request below. Be kind but clear, give a brief honest reason, and if it fits, offer one alternative. Keep it under 90 words so it does not feel like a lecture.

Their request: [PASTE REQUEST]

Reason I am saying no: [YOUR REASON]

4. Nudge an email nobody answered

Write a short, friendly follow-up to someone who has not replied. No guilt, no pressure. Remind them what I asked, make it a one-line reply for them, and keep it under 70 words.

Original email: [PASTE ORIGINAL]

How long it has been: [DAYS OR WEEKS]

5. Handle an angry customer without making it worse

Write a calm, respectful reply to the upset message below. Do not argue, make excuses, or admit fault I have not agreed to. Show them I heard them, tell them the one thing I will do next, and give a real way to reach me. Keep it steady and short.

Their message: [PASTE MESSAGE]

What actually happened, for my context only: [YOUR SIDE]

What I am willing to do: [YOUR FIX OR LIMIT]

6. Write an after-hours auto-reply

Write a friendly automatic email reply for when I am closed or slammed. Set expectations for when I will respond, point them to [PHONE / WEBSITE / FORM] for anything urgent, and keep it warm and short.

My business: [NAME AND WHAT YOU DO]

My hours: [YOUR HOURS]

7. Turn a phone call into a written recap

I just got off a call with a customer. Turn my notes into a short, clear recap email that confirms what we agreed on, lists any next steps with who does what, and asks them to reply "yes" if that all looks right. Keep it friendly and under 130 words.

My call notes: [PASTE NOTES]

Section 2: Quotes, estimates, proposals and invoices

8. Turn rough notes into a clean quote

Turn my rough notes into a clear, itemized quote a customer can actually understand. Use plain language, group the line items, add a one-line summary at the top, and leave a clearly marked spot for the total, taxes, and terms. Do not invent prices I did not give you.

My notes: [PASTE NOTES, INCLUDING ANY PRICES YOU KNOW]

9. Build an estimate from a job description

I do [YOUR TRADE, e.g. lawn care, AC repair, catering]. A customer described the job below. Walk me through a simple estimate: list the tasks involved, the materials or time each likely needs, and questions I must answer before I can price it. Do not guess final dollar amounts. Just help me not forget anything.

The job the customer described: [PASTE DESCRIPTION]

10. Write a simple one-page proposal

Write a one-page proposal from the bullets below. Include, in this order: the problem in their words, what I will do, what they get, the timeline, and the price. Keep it confident and plain. No filler, no buzzwords.

Client: [NAME]

Bullets: [PASTE BULLETS]

Price: [YOUR PRICE]

11. Explain a price increase

Write a short, respectful message telling a customer my price is going up. Thank them for their business, state the new price and the date it starts, give one honest reason, and reassure them the quality stays the same. Keep it under 120 words and do not over-apologize.

Old price: [OLD] New price: [NEW] Starts: [DATE]

12. Chase a late payment (friendly first)

Write a polite invoice reminder for an overdue payment. Keep it friendly and assume the best. State the invoice number, amount, and due date, and make it dead simple to pay. Give me two versions: a gentle first reminder and a slightly firmer second one for if they still do not pay.

Invoice: [NUMBER] Amount: [AMOUNT] Due: [DATE] How to pay: [METHOD]

13. Answer "your price is too high"

A customer said my price is too high. Write three short, calm replies I could send: one that holds my price and explains the value simply, one that offers a smaller scope at a lower price, and one that walks away politely and leaves the door open. No begging, no insulting them.

The job and my price: [DETAILS]

Section 3: Reviews, follow-up and winning customers back

14. Ask a happy customer for a review

Write a short, warm text and a short email asking a happy customer to leave a Google review. Thank them first, make it easy, and leave a clear spot for the review link. Keep each under 60 words and not needy.

What we did for them: [THE JOB]

15. Reply to a positive review

Write a friendly, genuine reply to this positive review. Thank them by name, mention one specific thing they said so it does not sound copied and pasted, and keep it under 50 words.

Review: [PASTE REVIEW]

16. Reply to a negative review (calm and public)

Write a calm, professional public reply to this negative review. Do not argue or make excuses. Acknowledge their experience, briefly note my side only if it helps, offer to make it right, and give a way to reach me directly. Keep it short and gracious. Remember other customers are reading this too.

Review: [PASTE REVIEW]

What actually happened, for context only: [YOUR SIDE]

17. Ask for the review right after the job

Write me a simple 3-message follow-up I can send after a finished job: a thank-you the same day, a check-in two days later, and a review request a week later. Keep each short and human, and put the ask for the review only in the last one.

The job: [WHAT YOU DID] Customer: [FIRST NAME]

18. Win back a customer who went quiet

Write a warm, low-pressure message to a past customer I have not heard from in a while. Remind them who I am, give one honest reason to check in or come back, and make replying easy. Under 80 words. Do not sound like a sales robot.
Customer: [NAME] Last job and date: [DETAILS]

Section 4: Marketing and social posts

19. Turn one idea into a week of posts

Take the idea below and write 5 short social posts about it, one for each weekday. Change the angle each day: a quick tip, a short story, a question, a before-and-after, and a soft offer. Plain language, one clear call to action each, and no wall of hashtags.
Idea: [YOUR IDEA] Business: [NAME AND WHAT YOU DO] Town: [YOUR CITY]

20. Turn a finished job into a post

Write a short social post about a job I just finished. Make it feel real and local, focus on the result for the customer, and end with a soft call to action. Under 80 words. Add 3 simple caption options I can choose from.
The job: [WHAT YOU DID] The result: [OUTCOME]

21. Announce a promo or offer

Write a clear announcement for the offer below. Lead with the benefit to the customer, state the offer and deadline plainly, and tell them exactly how to claim it. No hype words. Give me a short version for a text and a longer version for a post.
Offer: [DETAILS] Deadline: [DATE] How to claim: [ACTION]

22. Write a Google Business Profile post

Write a short Google Business Profile post (under 1500 characters) about the update below. Keep it friendly, local, and easy to skim, with one call to action at the end.
Update: [WHAT IS NEW]

23. Come up with a month of content ideas

I run [YOUR BUSINESS] in [YOUR TOWN]. Give me 20 simple social post ideas my customers would actually care about. Mix helpful tips, behind-the-scenes, seasonal, customer wins, and light promos. Keep each idea to one line so I can pick and go.

Section 5: Hiring and team

24. Write a job posting that gets replies

Write a clear job posting for the role below. Include: what we do, the role in plain terms, what a normal day looks like, what they need, the pay range, and exactly how to apply. Make it honest and appealing, not corporate. Add a short version I can post on Facebook or Indeed.

Role: [TITLE] Duties: [BULLETS] Pay: [RANGE] Apply by: [METHOD]

25. Screen applicants fast

Give me 6 short screening questions for the role below that quickly reveal whether someone is a good fit. For each, tell me what a strong answer sounds like and what a red flag sounds like.

Role: [TITLE] Most important trait: [WHAT MATTERS MOST]

26. Write a how-to guide (SOP) for a task

Turn the steps below into a clean, numbered how-to guide a brand new team member could follow without asking me questions. Add a short intro on when to use it, call out anything easy to get wrong, and end with a quick checklist. Write it so a 16-year-old could follow it.

Task: [NAME] Rough steps: [PASTE STEPS]

Section 6: Inbox, paperwork and running the week

27. Triage my inbox

Below are the subject lines and short notes from the emails and messages sitting in my inbox. Sort them into three groups: reply today, reply this week, and no reply needed. For the "reply today" ones, give me a one-line draft answer for each so I can just send.

My messages: [PASTE SUBJECT LINES AND NOTES]

28. Summarize a long document or contract

Read the document below and give me: a 3-sentence plain summary, the 5 things I most need to know, any deadlines or dollar amounts, and anything that looks risky or one-sided. Then list any questions I should ask before I sign. This is not legal advice, just a plain-English read.

Document: [PASTE TEXT]

29. Turn meeting or call notes into action items

Turn the notes below into a clean list of action items. For each: what needs to happen, who owns it, and by when. Put anything unclear in a short "need to confirm" list at the bottom.

Notes: [PASTE NOTES OR TRANSCRIPT]

30. Write a simple policy in plain English

Write a short, fair [CANCELLATION / DEPOSIT / LATE / REFUND / WARRANTY] policy for my business that a customer can actually understand. Keep it firm but friendly and under 150 words.

My rules: [YOUR TERMS] Business: [WHAT YOU DO]

31. Plan and prioritize my week

Here is a brain dump of everything on my plate. Group it, then give me a simple plan: the 3 things that matter most this week, what I can push to next week, and what I could hand off or set up to run on its own. Keep it short and do not add anything I did not mention. My list: [PASTE EVERYTHING]

32. Build a reusable template

Create a fill-in-the-blank template I can reuse for [EMAILS / QUOTES / FOLLOW-UPS / POSTS] like the example below. Keep the parts that stay the same, and mark the parts I swap out with [BRACKETS]. Add a one-line note on when to use it.

Example: [PASTE ONE YOU HAVE SENT BEFORE]

33. Explain something technical to a customer

Explain the situation below to my customer in plain, friendly language, the way I would if I were standing in their driveway. No jargon. Tell them what it means for them, what I recommend, and what it will cost or take. Under 150 words.

The technical situation: [PASTE DETAILS]

Section 7: Texts and quick messages

34. Write a text a customer will actually read

Turn the message below into a short, clear text under 40 words. Friendly, no corporate stiffness, one clear ask or next step. Give me two versions so I can pick.

What I need to say: [YOUR MESSAGE]

35. Confirm an appointment by text

Write a short appointment confirmation text and a reminder text for the day before. Include a spot for the date, time, and my business name, and make it easy for them to reply if they need to reschedule.
Appointment: [SERVICE, DATE, TIME] Business: [NAME]

36. Recover a missed call by text

I missed a call from a potential customer. Write a quick, friendly text I can send right back that says I am sorry I missed them, asks how I can help, and offers two times to talk. Under 40 words.

Section 8: Bilingual (English and Spanish)

Built for the Valley. Your customers move between both languages, so your business should too.

37. Reply in both languages

Take my reply below and give me a clean version in English and a natural version in Spanish. Use the friendly, everyday Spanish people in South Texas actually speak, not stiff textbook Spanish. Keep both short.
My reply: [PASTE OR WRITE YOUR MESSAGE]

38. Translate a quote or document for a customer

Translate the text below into clear, natural Spanish a customer can easily understand. Keep the numbers, prices, and dates exactly the same. If a word does not translate cleanly, keep it simple and everyday. Then give me a short note on anything I should double-check.
Text: [PASTE TEXT]

39. Make a post work in both languages

Take the social post below and give me an English version and a Spanish version that both sound natural, not translated word for word. Keep the same friendly tone and call to action in both.
Post: [PASTE POST]

Section 9: The one prompt that makes every other prompt better

40. Fix and sharpen any answer

That was close, but not quite. [PICK ANY: make it shorter / make it sound more like me / warmer / more direct / simpler / add a clear next step / give me 3 versions / now do it in Spanish too]. Here is more context you should know: [ADD ANYTHING THAT WOULD HELP].

Keep this one in your back pocket. You almost never get the perfect answer on the first try, and you do not have to. Just tell the AI what to change in plain words, the same way you would coach a new hire. That back-and-forth is where the real time savings live.

PART TWO: THE AI TOOL CHEAT SHEET

The right tool for each job, with an actual opinion. For every job you get our top pick, one honest backup and when you would choose it instead, a rough monthly cost, and how long setup really takes. You almost never need more than one or two of these. Start with the job that eats the most of your week.

Prices move. These are rough January 2026 ranges. Always start on the free plan and check the tool's own site before you pay.

1. Everyday writing, email and thinking

- **Our pick: ChatGPT or Claude (free plan).** Both do 90 percent of what is in this kit. Pick one, learn it, do not shop around. ChatGPT is the most well-known and flexible. Claude tends to write in a more natural, human voice and is easy to talk to.
- **Honest backup: Google Gemini or Microsoft Copilot.** Choose these if you already live in Google Workspace or Microsoft 365, because they sit right inside Gmail, Docs, Outlook, and Word where you already work.
- **Cost:** Free to about \$20/mo if you upgrade. Start free.
- **Setup:** 5 minutes. Make an account and go.

2. Booking and scheduling

- **Our pick: Calendly.** Send one link, let people book themselves, stop the phone tag. Free plan covers one meeting type, which is plenty to start.
- **Honest backup: Acuity Scheduling.** Choose Acuity if you take payments at booking or run classes and want more control over your calendar and intake forms.
- **Cost:** Free to about \$16 to \$20/mo.
- **Setup:** 20 to 30 minutes to connect your calendar and set your hours.

3. Call and meeting notes

- **Our pick: Fathom.** It joins your video calls, records, and writes the summary and action items for you. Genuinely useful free plan.
- **Honest backup: Otter.ai or a Plaud recorder.** Choose Otter if most of your talks are in person or on the phone rather than on video. Choose a Plaud recorder (a small physical device) if you want to capture in-person conversations and windshield time without holding your phone.
- **Cost:** Free to about \$20/mo. Plaud device is a one-time hardware cost plus an optional plan.
- **Setup:** 10 minutes for the software. Then pair it with Prompt 29 to turn notes into action items.

4. Quotes, proposals and PDFs

- **Our pick: ChatGPT or Claude with your own template.** Feed it your numbers and one example you have sent before (Prompt 32), and it will draft clean quotes and proposals fast. Paste into Google Docs or Canva to make it look sharp.
- **Honest backup: Canva Docs.** Choose Canva if looks matter to your customers and you want a branded, good-looking PDF with your logo and colors baked in.
- **Cost:** Free to about \$20/mo.
- **Setup:** 15 minutes to build one reusable template you fill in from now on.

5. Social posts and content

- **Our pick: ChatGPT or Claude for the words, Canva for the picture.** Write the caption with a prompt from Section 4, drop it on a Canva template, done in minutes.
- **Honest backup: A scheduler like Buffer or Metricool.** Choose one of these once you are consistent and tired of posting by hand. They let you write a week of posts and schedule them all at once.
- **Cost:** Free to about \$30/mo.
- **Setup:** 30 minutes to pick a couple of Canva templates you reuse.

6. Design and images

- **Our pick: Canva.** Flyers, social graphics, menus, signs, business cards. Templates do the heavy lifting. The free plan is strong.
- **Honest backup: ChatGPT image generation or Adobe Express.** Choose ChatGPT images when you need a custom picture that no template has. Choose Adobe Express if you want more precise design control than Canva.
- **Cost:** Free to about \$15/mo for Canva Pro.
- **Setup:** 15 minutes. Search a template, swap your text and logo, download.

7. Missed calls and reception

- **Our pick: An AI receptionist or answering service.** If you lose jobs because you cannot pick up while you are working, this pays for itself fast. It answers, takes a message or books the job, and texts you.
- **Honest backup: A live answering service, or a simple missed-call text-back.** Choose a live service if your customers expect a real human. If budget is tight, start free with Prompt 36 and a missed-call auto-text.
- **Cost:** About \$50 to \$200/mo, depending on call volume.
- **Setup:** A few hours to configure, but mostly hands-off after that.

8. Follow-up and customer list (CRM)

- **Our pick: HubSpot Free.** Keep every customer, lead, and conversation in one place so nothing falls through the cracks. The free plan is genuinely free and covers most local businesses for a long time.
- **Honest backup: A simple spreadsheet, or Zoho.** Choose a spreadsheet if you have under a hundred customers and hate software. Choose Zoho if you want more automation and already use other Zoho tools.
- **Cost:** Free to start. Paid tiers only when you grow.
- **Setup:** 30 to 60 minutes to import your contacts.

9. Bookkeeping and invoices

- **Our pick: QuickBooks.** The one your accountant almost certainly already knows, which saves you money and headaches at tax time.
- **Honest backup: Wave.** Choose Wave to keep costs low. Its free Starter plan covers basic invoicing and accounting for a lot of small operations, with paid upgrades if you want more.
- **Cost:** Free (Wave Starter) to about \$30/mo or more (QuickBooks).
- **Setup:** 1 to 2 hours, or lean on your bookkeeper to set it up right once.

10. Website chat and FAQs

- **Our pick: A website chat widget with saved answers.** Catch questions the moment someone is on your site and turn browsers into leads.
 - **Honest backup: Tidio or Intercom.** Choose Tidio for a simple, affordable chat with basic automation. Choose Intercom only if you are larger and want heavy automation and support features.
 - **Cost:** Free to about \$30/mo.
 - **Setup:** 30 minutes to add it to your site and load your common answers.
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Before you buy anything: start on the free plan every time. Prices and plans change often, so check current pricing on the tool's own site before you commit. Most owners never need more than one or two of these to win back real hours. Pick the job that costs you the most time and start there. That is it.

Which AI assistant should I use?

For everything in the Prompt Library, you only need one AI assistant. Here is the plain version so you do not overthink it.

- **ChatGPT (chatgpt.com).** The best-known one. Great all-rounder. The free plan handles almost everything in this kit. If you upgrade, it is about \$20/mo.
- **Claude (claude.ai).** Writes in a natural, human voice and is easy to talk back and forth with, which is great for customer replies and anything in your own tone. Free plan to start, about \$20/mo to upgrade. Claude comes in a few versions: the everyday one is fast and smart, and there is a heavier one for tougher thinking. For this kit, the default is more than enough.
- **Google Gemini or Microsoft Copilot.** Pick one of these if you already work all day in Google or Microsoft, because it sits right inside the email and documents you already use.

You do not need to know model version numbers. Open one, use the free plan, and let it do the work. If you outgrow the free plan, upgrading is the cheapest assistant you will ever hire.

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Want us to find every time leak in your week and hand you a done-for-you plan? Book your AI Workday Audit.