AI Workforce Literacy

Level 1, Module 4: Practical Use Cases for Generative AI

Introduction

Having learned the fundamentals of AI, LLMs, and effective prompting, it is time to put theory into practice. The true value of generative AI in the workplace comes from its application to real-world tasks. This module will walk you through several of the most common and high-impact use cases for generative AI in a business context.

Our goal is to move beyond abstract concepts and show you *how* to apply the prompting skills you have learned to solve everyday problems. For each use case, we will provide a scenario, a poorly constructed prompt, a well-crafted prompt, and an analysis of why the improved prompt works better. This hands-on approach will help you build the confidence and intuition to identify opportunities for using AI in your own role.

Chapter 1: Use Case - Drafting & Content Creation

Drafting is one of the most powerful applications of generative AI. It can help you overcome writer's block and produce a solid first draft of an email, report, or marketing copy in seconds, which you can then refine.

Scenario: You are a manager who needs to send an email to your team announcing a last-minute, mandatory training session scheduled for tomorrow.

Poor Prompt:

> *"Write an email about a training session tomorrow."*

- **Why it's poor:** This prompt is far too vague. It lacks context (Who is the email for? What is the training about?), a specific tone, and essential details (What time? Where? Why is it mandatory?). The result will be a generic and unusable draft.

Good Prompt:

> *"Act as a supportive but firm manager. Draft a clear and concise email to my team of software developers announcing a mandatory, last-minute training session on the new security protocols. The session is tomorrow, Friday, October 31st, from 2 PM to 3 PM in Conference Room 3. Acknowledge that the timing is sudden, explain that it's crucial for our upcoming project launch, and maintain a positive and professional tone."*

- **Why it's good:**
    - **Role:** "Act as a supportive but firm manager."
    - **Context:** The email is for software developers, the training is on new security protocols, it's mandatory, and it's important for a project launch.
    - **Explicit Instruction:** "Draft a clear and concise email..."
    - **Persona/Format:** Includes all necessary details (date, time, location) and specifies the desired tone (positive, professional, acknowledging the inconvenience).

Chapter 2: Use Case - Summarization

We are all inundated with information. Generative AI is an incredibly powerful tool for condensing long documents, articles, or email threads into their essential points, saving you valuable time.

Scenario: You have been sent a 20-page industry report on the future of renewable energy, but you only have a few minutes to prepare for a meeting where it will be discussed.

Poor Prompt:

> *"Summarize this report." (after pasting the text)*

- **Why it's poor:** This is a low-effort prompt. The AI doesn't know who you are, what you're interested in, or what format you need. The summary might be too long, too technical, or focus on the wrong aspects of the report.

Good Prompt:

> *"I am a project manager preparing for a high-level strategy meeting. Analyze the following industry report on renewable energy and generate a summary of the 5 most important key takeaways for a non-technical business audience. Focus specifically on market trends and investment opportunities. Present the summary as a numbered list with a brief explanation for each point."*

- **Why it's good:**
  - **Role/Context:** "I am a project manager... preparing for a high-level strategy meeting... for a non-technical business audience."
  - **Explicit Instruction:** "Analyze the... report and generate a summary of the 5 most important key takeaways."
  - **Constraints:** Specifies the focus ("market trends and investment opportunities") and the format ("a numbered list with a brief explanation").

Chapter 3: Use Case - Brainstorming & Ideation

Generative AI can be an excellent creative partner, helping you break out of conventional thinking and explore a wide range of possibilities. It can act as a tireless brainstorming assistant that never runs out of ideas.

Scenario: Your team is tasked with coming up with a name for a new brand of organic, eco-friendly coffee.

Poor Prompt:

> *"Give me some names for a coffee brand."*

- **Why it's poor:** The prompt is generic, so the ideas will be generic. It fails to capture the unique selling points of the product.

Good Prompt:

> *"Act as a creative branding expert. We are launching a new brand of premium, single-origin, organic coffee that is sourced from sustainable, fair-trade farms in Colombia. Our target audience is environmentally conscious millennials. Brainstorm 10 potential brand names. For each name, provide a short tagline and a*

> *brief explanation of why it would appeal to our target audience. Organize the output in a table with three columns: 'Brand Name', 'Tagline', and 'Rationale'."*

- **Why it's good:**
  - **Role:** "Act as a creative branding expert."
  - **Context:** Provides rich detail about the product (premium, single-origin, organic, sustainable, fair-trade) and the target audience (environmentally conscious millennials).
  - **Explicit Instruction:** "Brainstorm 10 potential brand names."
  - **Persona/Format:** Specifies exactly what should be delivered for each name (tagline, rationale) and how it should be formatted (a table).

Chapter 4: Use Case - Information Retrieval & Explanation

While not a replacement for a search engine, an LLM can be excellent for explaining complex topics in simple terms or extracting specific information from a provided text.

Scenario: You are reading a company financial document and come across the term "EBITDA," but you are not sure what it means or why it is important.

Poor Prompt:

> *"What is EBITDA?"*

- **Why it's poor:** This will give you a correct but likely technical and generic definition. It won't explain *why* it's relevant in the context you're seeing it.

Good Prompt:

> *"Explain the financial term 'EBITDA' as you would to a new marketing intern with no background in finance. Use a simple analogy to help clarify the concept. Also, briefly explain in one or two sentences why a company might focus on this metric instead of just net profit."*

- **Why it's good:**
  - **Context:** Specifies the target audience for the explanation ("a new marketing intern with no background in finance"), which forces the AI to simplify its language.

- **Explicit Instruction:** "Explain the financial term 'EBITDA'..." and "briefly explain why a company might focus on this metric..."
- **Persona/Format:** Asks for a specific pedagogical tool ("Use a simple analogy").

Conclusion

In this module, we have demonstrated how to apply the fundamental principles of prompting to four common and powerful business use cases. The pattern is consistent: providing role, context, explicit instructions, and format specifications dramatically improves the quality of the AI's output.

Key Takeaways: - Apply the **C.R.E.P. framework** (Context, Role, Explicit Instruction, Persona) to structure your prompts for practical tasks. - For **drafting**, provide all necessary details and specify the desired tone. - For **summarization**, define your role, your audience, and what you want to focus on. - For **brainstorming**, give the AI rich context about the product and target audience to get creative, relevant ideas. - For **explanation**, specify the knowledge level of the intended audience to get a tailored and understandable answer.

Your next step is to start actively looking for opportunities in your own daily work to apply these techniques. The more you practice, the more intuitive prompting will become.

In the next module, **"AI's Limitations & the Importance of Verification,"** we will address a crucial counterpoint: understanding when *not* to trust the AI and how to develop a healthy sense of professional skepticism.

References

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