AI Best Practices

A guide to AI that actually works

Last month, someone spent 45 minutes on a one-page summary using ChatGPT. The right approach took 2 minutes.

This deck is about the trick.

Skeptic → Explorer → Whisperer → Strategist → Operator → Orchestrator → Builder

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Most people are here.   This deck takes you here.

1 billion+

use AI tools monthly

< 2%

pay for premium

Reuters

PCs
1980s

Internet
1990s

Smartphones
2010s

AI
Now

$4.4T

in annual value. Only 31% in full production.

McKinsey Global Institute, ServiceNow

The core skill for AI is talking.

You already have it.

Let's see what most people get wrong.

ChatGPT

deep

API

LLM

training

Claude

learning

GPT

OpenAI

neural net

transformer

agents

Gemini

MCP

tokens

RAG

inference

retrieval

vector DB

fine-tuning

prompts

embeddings

AGI

Anthropic

copilot

hallucinatio
n

Llama

context

open-source

grounding

parameters

window

You use apps.

Apps use agents.

Agents call APIs.

APIs talk to LLMs.

Who Makes What

Company	LLM	App
OpenAI	GPT	ChatGPT
Anthropic	Claude	Claude.ai
Google	Gemini	Gemini
Microsoft	(OpenAI's)	Copilot

The real action is in agents and apps.

41%

of GitHub code is now AI-generated

19% longer

when developers rely on AI
without understanding it

Addy Osmani

The gap between using AI
and using AI well
is massive.

10×

Microsoft 365 Copilot daily users,
year over year

You've got the basics.
Now let's give you the skills.

Write me a proposal for improving
our onboarding process.

→ Generic, surface-level output

Assign a Role

vs. talking to a stranger

Write me a proposal for improving our onboarding process.

You are a senior HR operations consultant. Write me a proposal for improving our onboarding process.

Be Specific

Write me a proposal for improving our onboarding process.

Write a proposal for reducing
onboarding from 4 to 2 weeks,
for the VP of People, under 2 pages.

One Task at a Time

vs. the kitchen sink

Write the proposal, draft an email,
create a budget spreadsheet,
and summarize risks.

Structure the proposal with:
1. Problem statement
2. Proposed solution
3. Expected outcomes
4. Timeline

Power Keywords

vs. leading the witness

Don't you think reducing onboarding to 2 weeks would be great?

Be radically honest about challenges.
Think step by step.
Challenge my assumptions.

Define the Output

(No format guidance)
→ Random format, 5-page essay
when you needed bullets.

One-page executive brief with
bullet points. Data-driven language.
Reader has 2 minutes.

Same task. Same information.
Just better words.

But we never changed what the AI knew.

You've changed the words.
Now let's change the information.

Same prompt.
Different information.

Dramatically different result.

Plausible but generic

Could be for any company.

Sounds like someone who works here

Same prompt + your context.

Meet your
AI colleague.

Brilliant. Helpful. Remembers nothing.

Too much. Contradictory. Too broad.

Three ways to confuse your AI.

Let AI tell you what it needs.

"Before you start, ask me clarifying questions."

Not too much.
Not too little.

The right context at the right time.

You've mastered context. But you're providing it from scratch every time.

Without vs. With a Skill

same prompt, different starting point

Role: senior HR consultant
Format: leadership brief
Tone: direct, data-driven
Audience: VP of People

Typed. Every. Single. Time.

"Write a proposal for reducing onboarding from 4 to 2 weeks."

That's it.
The skill knows the rest.

Directions every trip

Effort. Every. Time.

GPS that learns

Compounds permanently.

"Custom instructions"
= "System prompts"
= "Rules"
= "Skills"

You talk to AI like a pro.
You've set up its playbook.
But who's doing all the work? Still you.

1. **You search**

2. **You paste**

3. **AI drafts**

4. **You apply**

You're using a Ferrari to carry groceries.

1. **Agent retrieves**

2. **Agent identifies gaps**

3. **Agent creates**

4. **You review**

Same colleague.
Now she has hands.

Eyes, a phone, and a to-do list.

Web   Email   Docs   Data   Calendar   Custom

Without

With

You copy-paste
You forget the budget memo
VP asks — too late

Agent reads directly
Finds what you forgot
Flags what you missed

Trust, but verify.

Never trust numbers you didn't provide.
Verify claims against sources.
Use AI for drafts, not decisions.
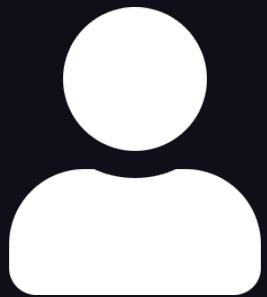
AI is a power tool, not autopilot.

When the answer 'feels right' but you can't verify it — that's the most dangerous moment.

You're managing AI well.
Time to orchestrate it.

One Chef

Prep

Grill
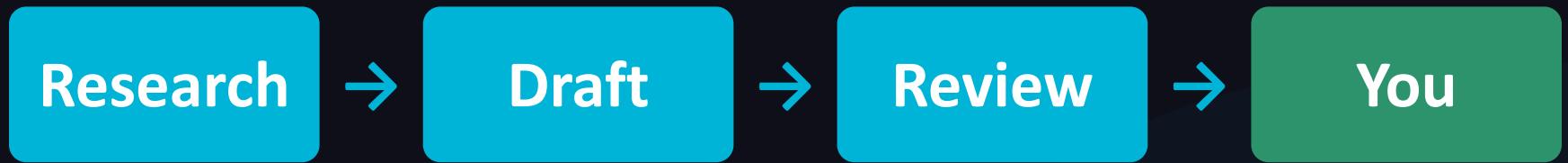
Sauce

Plate

The trick isn't making one AI smarter. It's making many work together.

Research → Draft → Review → You

Each agent does one thing.
The chain does everything.

Skills

You already know these.
Now each agent gets its own.

Skills compound.
The brigade gets smarter every time.

1.5 hrs

of you being the bottleneck

Illustrative estimate

15 min

of judgment — the part only humans can do

Same proposal.
The chain gets smarter every time.

Your feedback becomes skills. She won't remember, but the skills will.

Let's come back to where we started.

Remember the 45-minute summary?

Two minutes. That's the trick.

The secret was never in the AI.

Now go try it — one task, this week.