Prompt Engineering Frameworks Guide

This guide outlines the 8 most widely used prompt engineering frameworks. For each, we explain the purpose, key steps, and provide a practical example relevant to small businesses.

1. Chain-of-Thought (CoT)

Purpose: Encourage the model to reason step-by-step instead of jumping to conclusions.

Steps:

1. Present the question.
2. Add the phrase: "Let's think step by step."
3. Let the model generate intermediate reasoning before producing an answer.

Example:

Q: How can I increase foot traffic to my local coffee shop?
A: Let's think step by step. First, identify who the current customers are. Then, consider what local marketing efforts are in place. Next, evaluate promotions or events that could attract new visitors. Finally, measure results.

2. REACT (Reason + Act)

Purpose: Combine natural language reasoning with action execution (e.g., tools or APIs).

Steps:

1. Ask a question.
2. Generate a "Thought" step.
3. Take an "Action" (e.g., search, calculator).
4. Record the "Observation."
5. Repeat as needed until final "Answer."

Example:

Question: What is the best time to post on Instagram for my bakery in NYC?
Thought: I need to find optimal Instagram posting times for small businesses in NYC.
Action: Search for social media engagement data.

Observation: Best times are 7–9 AM and 5–7 PM on weekdays.
Answer: Post between 7–9 AM or 5–7 PM on weekdays.

3. RICCE (Role, Instruction, Context, Constraints, Examples)

Purpose: Create structured prompts for specific, repeatable outcomes.

Steps:

1. Role: Define who the AI is.
2. Instruction: Specify the task.
3. Context: Provide background.
4. Constraints: Set tone, format, or other limits.
5. Examples: Give few-shot examples.

Example:

Role: You are a digital marketing expert.
Instruction: Write a Google ad for a local pet grooming business.
Context: The business is offering a 25% discount this month.
Constraints: Under 90 characters, must include "25% off".
Example: "Pamper Your Pet – 25% Off Grooming This Month! Book Now."

4. CRISP (Clarify, Reflect, Iterate, Structure, Prompt)

Purpose: Develop and refine prompts systematically.

Steps:

1. Clarify the goal.
2. Reflect on user needs.
3. Iterate on previous prompts.
4. Structure with a framework or template.
5. Prompt the model and test outputs.

Example:

Clarify: Need a promotional email for a fitness studio.
Reflect: Audience is busy professionals.
Iterate: Try different subject lines – time-saving benefits work best.
Structure: Use RICCE format.
Prompt: Write a 3-sentence email promoting a lunchtime workout class with a 10% discount.

5. TAP (Task, Audience, Purpose)

Purpose: Align prompts with communication strategy.

Steps:

1. Task: What should the model do?
2. Audience: Who is it for?
3. Purpose: Why are you creating it?

Example:

Task: Create a flyer for an end-of-season sale.
Audience: Local retail customers.
Purpose: Drive store visits and clear inventory.
Prompt: Write a bold, friendly flyer headline and body text for a 3-day clearance sale.

6. Prompt Patterning (Few-shot / Zero-shot / Instructional)

Purpose: Improve model performance through pattern examples.

Steps:

1. Choose pattern type:
    - Zero-shot: Direct task without examples.
    - Few-shot: Include 2–5 examples before the prompt.
    - Instructional: Give clear directives.

Example (Few-shot):

Q: Write a short social media post for a local yoga studio.
A: "Stretch. Breathe. Relax. Join us for your first class free. #YogaQueensNY"
Q: Write a short post for a food truck.
A: "Taco Tuesday is here! Find us on Main St. 11–3 PM. #FoodTruckLove"
Q: Write a short post for a neighborhood bookstore.
A: Stories await. Discover your next read today. #LocalBookstore

7. DELTA (Define, Elaborate, Limit, Test, Adjust)

Purpose: Improve prompt performance through iteration.

Steps:

1. Define the task clearly.
2. Elaborate on the context.
3. Limit ambiguity with constraints.
4. Test with the model.
5. Adjust based on responses.

Example:

Define: Create a tagline for a new juice bar.
Elaborate: Located in downtown, targets health-conscious professionals.
Limit: Max 6 words, fun and fresh tone.
Test: [Run prompt]
Adjust: Try versions with rhyming or puns.

8. MAIE (Meta-Awareness, Analysis, Iteration, Evaluation)

Purpose: Advanced reflection-based prompting.

Steps:

1. Meta-Awareness: What does the model know/assume?
2. Analysis: Break the problem into parts.
3. Iteration: Test different prompt versions.
4. Evaluation: Measure outputs for quality.

Example:

Meta: The model might assume all bakeries are full-service.
Analysis: I run a gluten-free bakery.
Iteration: Test prompts that specify dietary focus vs general.
Evaluation: Choose a prompt that delivers the clearest gluten-free brand message.