

YourAIPlaybook

Your First Week with AI at Work

A 5-day onboarding plan for professionals who want to start using AI at work without the learning curve.

Free Guide

youraiplaybook.io

Before You Start

This guide is built for working professionals. Not developers. Not AI researchers. People with real jobs, full calendars, and limited patience for tech hype.

Each day focuses on one practical use case you can apply immediately. By Friday, you'll have five AI-assisted workflows that save you real time every week.

Time commitment: 20-30 minutes per day. Do it during your morning coffee, lunch break, or commute.

What you'll need

- A free account on Claude (claude.ai) or ChatGPT (chat.openai.com)
- Access to your normal work tools (email, calendar, documents)
- A real task from your to-do list for each day

Important: This guide works with any AI assistant. We reference Claude and ChatGPT because they're the most accessible, but the principles apply to any tool.

Company policy check: Before using AI with work data, check your organization's AI usage policy. When in doubt, don't paste confidential or sensitive information into public AI tools. Use anonymized examples or general descriptions instead.

MONDAY

Conquer Your Email Backlog

Win: Draft 5 emails in the time it normally takes to write 1.

20 minutes

Email is the universal time sink. Today you'll use AI to draft responses, compose difficult messages, and clear your inbox faster.

1 Pick 5 emails you've been avoiding. The ones sitting in your inbox because they require a thoughtful response. Copy the email text (remove any sensitive details).

2 Paste each one and ask for a draft reply. Use this prompt:

```
"I received this email: [paste email]. Draft a reply that is [professional/friendly/direct].  
Key points I want to make: [your points]. Keep it under [word count] words."
```

3 Edit each draft in your voice. AI writes the structure. You add your personality and judgment. This should take 2 minutes per email instead of 10.

4 Try the "rewrite" trick. For one email, write your response normally. Then ask AI: "Make this more concise" or "Make this sound more confident." Compare versions.

5 Save your best prompt. Whichever email prompt worked best, copy it somewhere. This becomes your go-to email assistant prompt.

End-of-day check: How much time did you save? Most people report saving 30-45 minutes on email alone on Day 1.

TUESDAY

Prep for a Meeting in 10 Minutes

Win: Show up to your next meeting more prepared than everyone else.

25 minutes

Pick one meeting on your calendar today or tomorrow. You're going to use AI to prepare for it in a fraction of the usual time.

1 Dump the context. Paste the meeting agenda, any pre-read materials, and your notes from the last meeting into AI.

2 Ask for a prep brief.

```
"I have a [meeting type] meeting about [topic]. Here's the agenda and context: [paste]. Give me: 1. The 3 most important things to know going in 2. 2 questions I should ask 3. Any risks or tensions I should be aware of 4. What I should contribute based on my role as [your role]"
```

3 Build talking points. Ask AI to draft 2-3 concise talking points for your contributions. Edit them to sound like you.

4 Pre-write your follow-up. Ask AI to draft a follow-up email template you can fill in after the meeting.

Real scenario: Weekly team standup

Paste your project updates and ask: "Turn these raw updates into a 90-second verbal summary that sounds organized and confident. Lead with the most important item."

Bonus: After the meeting, paste your notes and ask AI to clean them into structured minutes with action items and owners.

Research Anything in Half the Time

Win: Get up to speed on a topic that would normally take hours.

25 minutes

Pick something you need to learn about for work. A new process, a competitor, an industry trend, a tool your team is considering. Something you'd normally spend an hour Googling.

1 Get the overview first.

```
"Explain [topic] like I'm a [your role] who needs to understand this for a decision at work. Focus on practical implications, not theory. Keep it under 500 words."
```

2 Go deeper on what matters. After reading the overview, ask follow-up questions about the parts that are relevant to your work. AI remembers the conversation context.

3 Get a comparison. If you're evaluating options:

```
"Compare [Option A] vs [Option B] for [your use case]. Give me a table with: key features, pricing, pros, cons, and who each is best for. Be honest about weaknesses."
```

4 Create a summary you can share. Ask AI to turn your research into a one-page brief you can send to your team or manager. This positions you as the person who did the homework.

Always verify. AI can hallucinate facts, especially numbers, dates, and specific claims. Use it for structure and synthesis, but double-check important details from original sources.

Write a Document That Would Take All Day

Win: Produce a polished first draft in 30 minutes instead of 3 hours.

30 minutes

Pick a document you need to write: a project plan, a proposal, a status report, a process description, a recommendation memo. Something that normally takes hours of staring at a blank page.

1 Outline first, then write. Don't ask AI to write the whole document at once. Start with the structure.

```
"I need to write a [document type] about [topic]. The audience is [who will read it]. The purpose is [what it should accomplish]. Give me a detailed outline with section headings and 2-3 bullet points of what should go in each section."
```

2 Review and adjust the outline. Move things around. Add sections. Remove what doesn't fit. This takes 5 minutes and saves you from rewriting later.

3 Write section by section. For each section, give AI the outline point and your notes. Ask it to draft that section only. Review and edit before moving on.

4 Polish at the end. Once all sections are drafted, paste the full document and ask: "Review this for consistency, tone, and flow. Flag anything that's repetitive or unclear."

Document types this works great for

Project plans, status reports, recommendation memos, meeting agendas, process documentation, onboarding guides, training materials, FAQs, executive summaries, grant narratives, policy drafts.

The secret: AI writes the bones. You add the judgment, the context, and the things only you know. That's how you produce quality work at speed.

FRIDAY

Plan Next Week and Build Your System

Win: Walk into Monday with a clear plan and a personal AI toolkit you'll keep using.

20 minutes

1 Weekly planning with AI. List everything you need to accomplish next week. Paste it in and ask:

```
"Here's everything on my plate next week: [paste list]. Help me: 1. Prioritize these by impact and urgency 2. Group related tasks together 3. Suggest a realistic daily schedule (I have about [X] hours of focused work time per day) 4. Flag anything that might be a blocker or dependency"
```

2 Reflect on this week. What worked? Which AI use cases saved you the most time? Ask AI to help you quantify it: "I used AI for [tasks] this week. Help me estimate the time I saved compared to doing them manually."

3 Build your personal prompt library. Collect the 3-5 prompts from this week that gave you the best results. Save them in a document you can access quickly. This is your AI toolkit.

4 Set your AI commitments for next week. Pick 2-3 recurring tasks where you'll use AI every time. Make it a habit, not an experiment.

Your Week 1 wins checklist

- Cleared email backlog faster than usual
- Showed up to a meeting more prepared
- Researched a topic in half the usual time
- Produced a polished document from a first draft
- Planned next week with AI-assisted prioritization

- Saved at least 2-3 hours total this week
- Built a personal prompt library (3-5 prompts)

Beyond Week 1

You've proven AI works for your job. Now make it stick.

Week 2-4: Build the habit

- 1 Use AI for at least one task per day.** The more consistent you are, the faster you develop intuition for what AI does well.
- 2 Expand to new use cases.** Try: brainstorming ideas, preparing for difficult conversations, analyzing data, creating presentations, writing social posts.
- 3 Teach someone else.** Show a colleague one thing you learned this week. Teaching forces you to solidify your own understanding.
- 4 Track your time savings.** Even a rough estimate helps. After a month, you'll have a concrete number to justify the investment.

Common mistakes to avoid

Don't paste sensitive data. Client names, financial details, personal information, trade secrets. Use anonymized descriptions or general scenarios instead.

Don't accept the first output. AI gives you a first draft, not a final product. Always review, edit, and add your expertise.

Don't use AI for tasks that need human judgment. Performance reviews, sensitive HR conversations, legal decisions, and ethical calls need your brain, not AI's.

The goal: AI should feel like a competent colleague who's always available, never annoyed, and gets you 80% of the way there. You provide the last 20% that makes it excellent.

You just saved yourself hours this week.

Imagine compounding that over months. That's the real power of AI at work: not one big moment, but consistent time savings that add up.

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