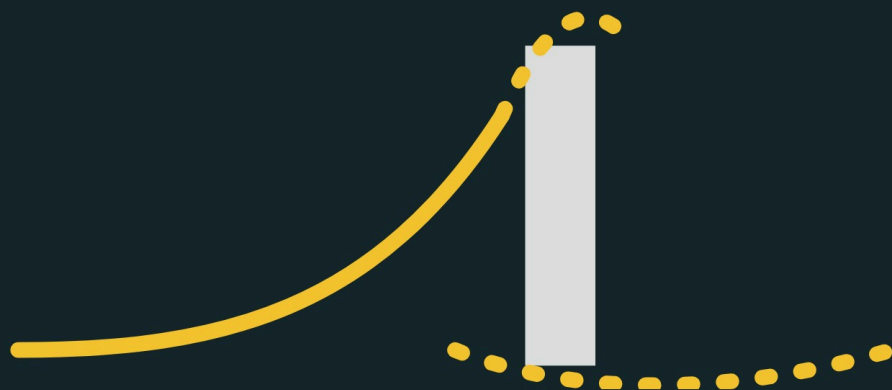


Climb It or Go Around It

Using AI in the job you have,
and finding your way when the
job is gone



Joe Fernandez

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THINKMORPHIC PRESS

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First edition, October 2026. ISBN 979-8-952634-01-5 (ebook)

The people described in this book, other than those named from public sources, are composites, built from published accounts of how each kind of work is done. Any resemblance to a real person or employer is coincidental.

This book offers general information about using AI tools at work. It is not legal, financial, tax or career advice. Rules, tools and prices change quickly; check anything important against its source before you rely on it. Product and company names are trademarks of their owners and are used here only to describe their products, with no endorsement on either side.

To Anu,

You are the kindest person I know, my anchor, and my truest best friend.

Through every step of this journey, your support has been absolute. You were always there to cheer me on, keep me cared for during long writing sessions, and keep my focus on success. But beyond your care, you were my sharpest sounding board: challenging my ideas, pushing back when something did not work, and inspiring concepts that made this book far better than when it started.

This book is about finding a way forward when the path changes, and you show that patience, grace, and steady strength every single day. Thank you for always believing in me, speaking the truth, and walking beside me as my partner and friend in everything.

*With all my love,
Joe*

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A Note from Joe

Over the past few years, the technology around us got smarter, and most of us loved it. Our banks started catching fraud on our cards before we noticed anything was wrong. A doorbell camera let us see who was at the front door from across the country. A camera over the crib let us watch our baby sleep from the phone in our hand. Our homes learned to lock themselves, call for help and tell us when a pipe was leaking. We welcomed every one of these changes, because they made our lives easier and safer.

Work feels different. When the same kind of technology shows up in the job we do to earn a living, it stops feeling like a convenience and starts feeling like a threat, because now it touches our ability to trade our skills for a paycheck. I understand that feeling. Some time ago I wrote a comment on LinkedIn about how AI would create new jobs, and it spread much further than I expected. Many replies agreed. Many others were worried, some were angry, and most came from people who saw AI taking things away and had not yet seen how it could work for them. I stopped replying, because every answer raised three more questions. This book is my answer to all of them. I have not lived the life of a night-shift nurse, a cab driver or a single parent working two jobs, so I have leaned on published accounts and real numbers, and I have tried to be honest about the hurt while showing the way forward.

There is an old story I keep coming back to.

Long ago, the owner of a timber camp hired a crew to cut lumber for the houses going up in a growing town. He paid each man by the amount of wood he cut and stacked. Everyone got straight to work. Nobody wanted to take a break, because a break meant losing time and losing money. One man was different. Every hour or two, he walked away for fifteen or twenty minutes, then came back and kept cutting. He did this all week.

On payday, the man who took the breaks was paid the most. The rest of the crew complained. He took breaks all week, they said, so how could he have cut more wood than we did? The owner said, "I was watching him. Every time he stepped away, he was sharpening his axe."

The men who never stopped were good workers. They worked hard all week. They were also cutting with an axe that got duller every hour. Our skills are the axe. The skills that built our careers still matter, and every so often, when new tools appear, the axe needs sharpening.

I learned this from my dad before I ever had a name for it. He spent about thirty-five years as a mechanic at a factory that built train coaches and engines. He started as a beginner and retired as the supervisor running the shop floor, and he got there by learning every new machine and method that came onto that floor.

In 2020, I decided to take my own break and sharpen mine. I enrolled in AI classes and started learning the tools well before most people around me were paying attention. It was not always convenient, and there were plenty of other things I could have done with that time. When AI arrived at my everyday work, I was ready for it, and I have been glad of that choice ever since.

It has also changed what I can do. Before AI, I had written a research paper, articles and posts, but never a book. Today I research and write by talking and texting with AI, often while doing chores around the house, and I have one book published and more on the way. If that can happen for me, it can happen for many of the people reading this.

In every one of those classes, I met people doing the same thing. They came from many kinds of work and many stages of life, and they were taking time out of busy lives to sharpen their own axes. Some were early in their careers. Some had been working for decades. A few had just lost their jobs and decided to use the time to learn. Not one of them was too old or too late.

The message of this book is simple. If you have not started yet, you still have time. You can do this without a computer science degree and without quitting your job. Step away for a little while, sharpen your axe, and come back to the work with a better tool in your hands. This book shows you how, field by field and skill by skill, starting with the tools on the phone you already carry.

I made this book free because the people who need it most are often the people least able to pay for it right now. I also used AI to help write it, and I checked every line, the same way this book asks you to check everything AI does for you. AI does the tasks. I own the results.

Here is what I hope you do this week. Find your field in this book and try one request with your own material. Spend twenty minutes teaching your AI assistant who you are and what you do. Then tell one person what you learned, because the best way to keep an axe sharp is to show someone else how to sharpen theirs.

And if you have already lost your job, please start with the part of the book called At the Wall. It is written for you, and you are not alone.

Everyone can sharpen their axe, and there is plenty of work ahead for the people who do.

Joe Fernandez

How to Use This Book

This book is for people whose work is changing because of AI: people who have already lost a job, people who are worried they are next, and people who simply want to stay ahead. The book is free because the people who need it most are often the ones least able to pay for one more thing right now.

Read the first part, find your own world, and try one thing this week. The rest you can read in any order.

Draw the LINE

The book follows four letters.

- **L: Learn the tools.** AI is much more than a chatbot. The toolbox chapter covers twelve kinds of tools, from assistants and research tools to images, video, spreadsheets, apps you can build without being a programmer, and automations that connect it all.
- **I: Introduce yourself.** Fifteen minutes of setup so the tools know who you are, what you do and how you like to work.
- **N: Never skip the check.** How to ask so AI understands, how to check what comes back, and how to stay safe.
- **E: Expand your reach.** The rest of the book: how your field is changing, the skills every job shares, one role in depth, the new jobs taking shape, and what to do if you are already at the wall.

Under all four letters sits one rule, the Decision Line. AI does the legwork, and you make the call. Decisions about money, health and a person's mind, and every promise you make to someone, stay with you.

A path through the book

- If you have never used an AI tool, start with the next page, Never Used AI? Start Here.
- Read the three chapters on getting set up. They take a few evenings, and everything after them works better because of them.
- Find your field in the part on how every world is changing, and read that chapter.
- Pick the skill chapters that match your week: organizing information, designing and creating, checking and reviewing, researching, or building products and services.
- If you have already lost work, go to At the Wall whenever you need it. You do not have to finish anything else first.

How the Try it yourself sections work

Most chapters include requests you can use word for word. Swap the parts in brackets for your own details. You can type them, or tap the microphone on your phone and say them out loud. Each Try it yourself section in this book ends with a short note on what to check before you use the answer, such as a date, a number or a name. AI tools can still get a fact wrong while sounding sure of it, so a quick check is what makes the answer safe to use.

Tool names change

AI tools change every few months. This book names the major tools where the name helps, and the companion page at thinkmorphic.com/climb keeps the current list, links and prices. If a feature in the book has moved or been renamed, check the page.

Share what you try

You can share a use case by email at joe@thinkmorphic.com: what you were trying to do, what you asked, and what happened. You can also ask for help with something the book does not cover. Every submission is read before anything is posted, names and

employers are removed, and the best ones become new examples for other readers.

Never Used AI? Start Here

If you have never typed a single request into an AI tool, this page is for you. All it takes is a phone and about ten minutes. You do not need a computer, and you do not need to know how AI works.

Step 1: Get one app

Download one free assistant app on your phone: ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude or Microsoft Copilot. If you use WhatsApp, Instagram or Facebook, Meta AI is already inside them. Pick one and sign in. You can try others later.

Step 2: Say this out loud

Tap the microphone or the voice button, and say:

I have never used AI before. I work as [your job]. Teach me how to use you, one small step at a time, and give me one thing to try today that would help with my work.

The tool will explain itself in plain words and give you something small to try.

Step 3: Do the one thing

Try what it suggests, on something from your own day. If the answer is not quite right, say what is wrong, the way you would to a new coworker: "Shorter." "Simpler words." "That's not how we do it here. We do it this way."

Make it your coach

An AI assistant is a patient teacher that never gets tired of your questions. After any answer, ask one of these:

- "How could I have asked that better?"

- "What should I learn next?"
- "What in your answer should I double-check?"

Ask them for a few weeks, and you will notice your own requests getting better, often faster than you expect.

Two things to keep out

Do not type in passwords, account numbers or Social Security numbers, and keep customers', patients' and coworkers' details out of a personal account. The chapter on asking well and staying safe explains why, and what to do instead.

If it all feels like a lot

Go slowly. Use one tool for one thing each week. Read only the first section of the toolbox chapter, on assistants, and the setup chapter, and leave the rest until you are ready. Plenty of people start this way and end up using AI every day within a couple of months. When you feel ready for more, the next part of the book is waiting.

PART ONE

Getting Set Up

Chapter 1: The Whole Toolbox

What AI can do for a working person once you look past the chat box

When most people think of AI, they picture a chat window. You type a question and it types an answer back. That picture leaves out most of what the tools can do for a working person now.

The same tools that answer your questions can draw the picture for a flyer, turn a page of notes into a two-minute training video with a narrator, read a sixty-page contract aloud while you drive, build a small app that tracks your customers, and work through the spreadsheet you have been afraid to open. Some of them will open a web browser and fill in a form for you while you watch.

A lot of people have started. Gallup asked 23,717 U.S. employees about AI in early 2026, and half said they use it at work in some way. When Gallup first asked in 2023, the figure was 21%. Most of those people, though, use one kind of tool for one kind of job. They own a full toolbox and keep reaching for the screwdriver.

I started the same way. I used AI to answer questions and clean up my writing. Over time I learned to talk to it instead of typing, to have it research a topic and teach me, to argue with it when I thought it was wrong, and to build things with it. I am rebuilding my own author website with AI, a job I would once have paid a developer to do. Each new kind of tool opened a door I did not know was there.

Think about how driving has changed. In an older car, you switched on the headlights when it got dark, turned on the wipers when it rained, moved the seat and the mirrors back every time someone else had driven, and adjusted the air for each passenger. Many newer cars do all of that for you. The seat and mirrors move to your profile when you get in, the lights and wipers come on

when they are needed, the climate adjusts for who is sitting where, and a camera reads the speed limit signs. The destination stays yours. The car takes the small chores so you can focus on the drive, and in the cars that now drive themselves in some cities, the ride becomes time to talk with the people beside you. AI at work does the same thing. It takes the routine steps off your plate so your attention goes to the part of the job only you can do.

This chapter walks through the whole toolbox, twelve kinds of AI tools in all. For each one you will find what it does in plain words, how people in ordinary jobs use it, one full worked example with the words to type, what to check before you trust the result, what it costs to start, and how getting good at it expands your reach in the job you have. You do not need to try all twelve. Skim the section titles, pick the two or three that fit your work, and come back for the others later.

A word about names

Tool names change faster than any book can keep up with. One of the best-known AI companies launched a video app that shot to the top of the app store, and its maker shut it down within about six months, telling users to download their videos before it closed. Anyone who had built their work around that one app had to start over somewhere else.

So learn the kind of tool and the way of asking. Those carry over from one product to the next. When a tool you rely on changes or disappears, you will know what to look for, and you can be working again within a day. Keep your own copies of everything you make.

Each section below names a few tools so you have something to search for. The companion page at thinkmorphic.com/climb keeps the current list, organized the same way as this chapter.

A word about plans

Many examples in this book chain several jobs into one request: read the notes, assign the follow-ups and put the reminders on your calendar. The free versions of most assistants handle the reading, writing and organizing well. Steps that act inside your other apps, such as your calendar, your email or a group chat, may need a paid plan, a work account that connects those apps, or a one-time setting that links them. When an example needs one of those and you do not have it, run the first part for free and do the last step yourself. The companion page at thinkmorphic.com/climb keeps a current list of what each plan includes.

1. The AI assistant you talk to

What it is. A general assistant is the tool most people already know. You can type into it or talk to it, and it can write, explain, summarize, compare, plan, translate and answer follow-up questions. Most of them can also look at a photo you take and tell you what is in it, read a document you upload, and switch to a slower "thinking" mode for harder problems.

The best known are ChatGPT from OpenAI, Claude from Anthropic, Gemini from Google, Copilot from Microsoft, Meta AI from Meta, Grok from xAI and DeepSeek from a Chinese company of the same name.

How they differ. Rankings between them shift every few months, so the most useful difference for you is where each one lives. Gemini is built into Gmail, Google Docs, Google Sheets and most Android phones. Copilot is built into Word, Excel, Outlook and Teams, and it is often the tool an employer provides. Meta AI sits inside WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook and is free, running on Meta's Muse Spark model. Meta's stronger Muse Wonder model sits behind paid tiers. Grok is tied to the X social network.

Two cautions belong here. DeepSeek's own privacy policy says it stores user data on servers in China. NASA, the Pentagon, several U.S. states and a number of other countries have blocked DeepSeek on government devices for that reason. Meta's privacy policy, as

Axios reported when the Muse models launched, places few limits on how the company can use what you share with its AI. You can still use these tools, as long as you keep anything personal, financial or work-related out of them.

For most people the right assistant is the one they will open every day, plus whichever one their employer approves for work.

How working people use it.

- A restaurant manager drafts a staff announcement about a schedule change, in English and Spanish.
- A home health aide asks it to explain a new medication sheet in plain words, with no patient details included.
- A truck driver parked at a rest stop talks through a dispute with a broker and asks how to word his reply.
- A bookkeeper pastes a confusing vendor email and asks what the vendor is asking for.
- A new supervisor role-plays a hard conversation with an employee who keeps coming in late.
- A parent asks it to explain the fine print in a phone contract before signing.

Try it yourself: the schedule change.

The situation. You manage a small restaurant. Starting next month the kitchen opens for Sunday brunch, which means Sunday shifts start at 8 a.m. instead of 11 a.m. Some staff will be unhappy, and two of your line cooks read Spanish more easily than English.

What you need before you ask. The facts (the new start time, the date it begins, how shifts will be assigned, any extra pay), the tone you want, and who will read it.

The words to type or say:

I manage a 25-person restaurant. Starting the first Sunday of next month we open for brunch, so Sunday shifts start at 8 a.m. instead of 11 a.m. Shifts will be assigned by sign-up first, then by rotation if we are short. Anyone working the 8 a.m. Sunday shift gets an

extra \$2 an hour. Write a short announcement for the staff group chat that explains the change, why we are doing it, how sign-up works and the extra pay. Friendly and direct, no corporate language, under 150 words. Then give me the same message in Spanish. Before you write, ask me anything you need to know, then tell me your plan in two lines and wait for my OK.

What comes back. A few questions first (when sign-up opens, where the sign-up sheet is), then two versions of the message.

What to check. Every fact: the date, the time and the pay. Read the Spanish version to someone fluent before you post it, because a machine translation can be correct and still sound stiff or slightly off.

Push it further. Ask it to play a restaurant server who is upset about the early start, and practice your answer before anyone brings it up in person.

What it costs to start. Every major assistant has a free version, with apps for iPhone and Android. Paid tiers commonly run about \$20 a month and give you more use, the stronger models and extra features. The newest models usually reach paid tiers first, and free versions can get narrower. Google, for example, limits its free Gemini app to its lightest model, while its paid tiers start at about \$5 a month.

How it expands your reach. The person who writes clearly and quickly becomes the one the team asks to write things: training guides, announcements, procedures and customer letters. Within your current job, that means more say in how the work gets done and more of your words in front of customers and managers.

2. Research with sources

What it is. Research tools search the web, read many pages and come back with an answer and links to where each fact came from. Perplexity was built around this idea. ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude each have a research mode that works for several minutes, reads dozens of sources and returns a written report.

How working people use it.

- A bank teller who wants to become a loan officer compares three licensing courses on cost, time, pass rate and what local banks ask for.
- An HR coordinator compares three training vendors for the company's new-hire program on cost, length and what employees say about them.
- An electrician has it pull the city's permit rules, fees and inspection checklist for a panel upgrade into one page before quoting the job.
- A small business owner compares four suppliers on price, delivery times and complaints.
- A job seeker has it read a company's recent news, its last annual report and the job posting, and turn them into a one-page brief with five questions to ask in the interview.
- A nurse looks up the published evidence behind a new practice her unit is adopting.

Try it yourself: should the office switch to text reminders?

The situation. You work the front desk at a medical office. Patients miss about one appointment in ten, and the office manager asks you to find out whether a text reminder service would help and which one to choose.

What you need before you ask. Your state, roughly how many appointments the office books each week, and the scheduling system you use now.

The words to type:

I work the front desk at a medical office in Ohio with four providers and about 400 appointments a week. About 10% of patients miss their appointments, and we remind them by phone. Research whether text reminders would help us and give me a short report with sources. I want to know what published studies say about text reminders and missed appointments, three services that work with [our scheduling system] and what each costs, what a medical office

needs in place to text patients under HIPAA and the federal rules on texting, and what offices like ours report after switching. Use government and medical journal sources where you can, and tell me which facts came from vendor sites or blogs. Ask me any questions first.

What to check. Open at least the three links that support the facts you care about most and confirm the page says what the AI says it does. Look at the date on every page, since prices and rules change. Watch for "best service" lists written by the services themselves, and have the office manager or your privacy officer confirm the rules on texting patients before anyone signs up.

Push it further. Ask it to turn the report into a one-page recommendation for your office manager, with the cost for a year, the expected drop in missed appointments and the two risks to watch.

What it costs to start. Basic research with sources is free in most tools. The longer research modes usually come with a limited number of free runs, with more on a paid tier.

How it expands your reach. People who can find good information fast, and say how sure they are of it, get asked into decisions. In most jobs, the person who arrives at a meeting with three sourced facts ends up shaping what the team decides.

3. A study partner for your own documents

What it is. Some tools answer only from the documents you give them. You upload a manual, a policy, a set of class notes or a pile of PDFs, and the tool answers questions from those sources and points to the line it used. Google's NotebookLM is the best-known example. Its free version lets you load up to 50 sources into a notebook. It can turn them into a podcast-style conversation between two AI hosts that you can listen to in the car, a narrated video overview, flashcards, a quiz or a mind map. ChatGPT, Claude and Copilot offer a similar idea through projects or notebooks where you keep your files.

How working people use it.

- A new hire loads the employee handbook and the benefits guide and asks what to choose during open enrollment.
- An apprentice electrician loads his study materials and has the tool quiz him every night.
- A paralegal loads a set of public court rulings and asks where they disagree.
- A parent loads the school handbook and finds the rule on make-up exams in seconds.
- A team lead loads three years of meeting notes and asks what was decided about a project and when.

Try it yourself: studying for a certification on your commute.

The situation. You are preparing for a professional exam in six weeks. You have a study guide, the official exam outline and a set of practice questions, and your only free time is a 40-minute drive each way.

What to do. Create a notebook and upload the study guide, the outline and the practice questions. Then ask:

Using only these sources, make an audio overview for someone who works full time and is studying for this exam. Focus on the three topics the exam outline weighs most heavily. Explain them in plain language with examples, and point out where students commonly get confused. Keep it to about 20 minutes.

Listen on the way to work. On the way home, listen again. In the evening, ask:

Give me 15 practice questions on the topics from today's audio overview, one at a time. After each answer, tell me whether I was right and show me the page in the study guide that explains it.

What to check. These tools are strict about where they look and less strict about whether they read it correctly. When an answer matters, click through to the cited passage and read it yourself. Never upload anything your employer treats as confidential to a personal account, and never upload patient or customer records.

Push it further. Ask it to make a one-page cheat sheet of the ten facts you keep getting wrong, and listen to a five-minute audio overview of just those the night before the exam.

What it costs to start. NotebookLM has a free tier with daily limits. Google's paid tiers raise the limits and add the more elaborate video formats.

How it expands your reach. The person who learns fastest picks up the new system, rule or product before anyone else, and coworkers start bringing their questions to that person. People who are good at this also become the team's trainers, the ones who turn a thick manual into something a new hire can learn in a week.

4. Pictures

What it is. Image tools create a picture from a description, or change a photo you give them. They can swap a background, remove an object, change the lighting, put readable text on a sign or poster, and keep the same character or product consistent across a series of images. Text on images used to come out garbled, and the newer tools handle it far better.

Tools to look up include ChatGPT's image feature, Google's Nano Banana models inside the Gemini app, Midjourney, Adobe Firefly, Canva's built-in AI tools and Microsoft's free image creator.

How working people use it.

- A church volunteer makes a flyer for the fall bake sale.
- A landscaper shows a homeowner what their yard could look like with a stone path and new plantings, before any work starts.
- A teacher makes a set of illustrations for a classroom reading unit.
- A small online seller puts product photos on clean, matching backgrounds.
- A real estate agent shows how an empty room might look furnished, labeled clearly as a virtual staging image.

How to ask for a picture. Image tools respond to visual detail. A good request covers:

- **Subject:** what is in the picture.
- **Setting:** where it is.
- **Style:** photo, illustration, watercolor, flat graphic.
- **Light and mood:** bright morning sun, warm evening light, clean studio light.
- **Framing:** close-up, wide shot, seen from above.
- **Text:** the exact words, in quotation marks, and where they go.
- **Size:** square for Instagram, tall for a phone screen, wide for a banner.
- **What to leave out:** no people, no logos, no clutter.

Try it yourself: a flyer for a side business.

The situation. You do mobile car detailing on weekends and want a flyer for the community board at the grocery store and a square version for social media.

The words to type:

Create a flyer for a mobile car detailing business called "Shine on Wheels." Show a clean dark blue SUV in a driveway in bright morning sun, with water beading on the hood, photographic style. At the top, in bold white letters: "We Come to You." At the bottom: "Interior and exterior detailing. Weekends only. Call or text 555-0142." Leave room in the bottom corner for a QR code. Tall letter-size layout. No people and no car brand logos.

Push it further. "Make the sky less saturated." "Move the phone number higher so it does not crowd the edge." "Now give me a square version for Instagram with only the business name and the words 'We Come to You.'"

What to check. Read every word on the image letter by letter; one wrong digit in a phone number wastes the whole print run. Look for a hidden brand logo on the car, odd hands or faces if there are people, and anything that looks like a real person who has not

agreed to be in your ad. If you sell the work, check the tool's terms for commercial use, which free tiers sometimes exclude. Some industries and platforms require you to say when an image was made or changed with AI, and real estate listings are one place to check the rules before you post.

What it costs to start. Most assistants include image creation in their free tier with daily limits. Dedicated tools such as Midjourney are paid.

How it expands your reach. Most small businesses need a steady stream of images for menus, flyers, social posts and product listings, and few can afford a designer. The person who can produce clean, accurate images quickly takes on the flyers, posts and signs nobody else has time for, and some turn the same skill into side income.

5. Video

What it is. AI video tools come in three kinds.

- **Clip makers** turn a description or a photo into a short video clip, usually a few seconds to a minute long, and some now add matching sound. Google Veo (inside the Gemini app and Google's Flow tool), Kling, Runway, Luma and Pika are names to look up.
- **Presenter tools** turn a script into a video with a narrator or an on-screen presenter, which is useful for training and explainers. HeyGen, Synthesia and Google Vids work this way.
- **Editors** let you edit a recorded video by editing its transcript. Delete a sentence in the text and the video cuts it out. Descript is the best-known example.

How working people use it.

- An HR coordinator makes a 90-second welcome video for new hires.
- A plumber records a short video for customers on how to shut off the main water valve in an emergency.

- A retail shift lead turns the store's opening checklist into a two-minute training video.
- A nonprofit volunteer makes a short appeal for the annual fund drive.
- A teacher makes a three-minute explainer that students can rewatch at home.

Try it yourself: a training video for opening the store.

The situation. You are a shift lead at a hardware store. Every new hire learns the opening routine by shadowing someone for a week, and it is never taught the same way twice. You want one short video everyone watches first.

Step one, the script. Ask your AI assistant:

Here are our 14 opening steps in the order we do them. Turn them into a narration script for a training video of about two minutes. Group the steps into four parts, use plain words a 17-year-old on their first day would follow, and mark where a short clip or a photo of each step should appear. Point out any step where the order matters for safety.

Step two, the pictures. Take photos or short phone videos of each step in the store yourself. Real footage of your own store beats anything generated. Use a clip maker only for a title shot or a simple transition, for example:

A five-second slow pan across the front of a small neighborhood hardware store at sunrise, warm light, the doors opening, no people, no store name visible.

Step three, the voice and the edit. Record the narration in your own voice, or use a presenter tool's voice, and assemble everything in an editor. Add captions; many new hires will watch without sound.

What to check. Watch the finished video with the most experienced opener in the store. A safety step taught wrong in a video gets taught wrong to every person who watches it. Never put a real person's face or voice into a video without their permission, and

get your manager's approval before anything goes on a public channel.

Push it further. Ask for a 15-second version for social media and a Spanish caption track, so the same video works for customers and for every new hire.

What it costs to start. Most clip makers and presenter tools give a small number of free credits, and paid tiers start at a few dollars a month for the low-cost tools and rise from there. Short clips from your phone plus a simple editor cost nothing.

How it expands your reach. Every business with more than a handful of people has training it repeats by hand. The person who turns that training into short videos saves the team hours with every new hire and becomes the one people turn to when something needs explaining.

6. Voice, sound and music

What it is. Audio tools turn text into natural-sounding speech in dozens of languages, turn speech into text, translate a recording into another language in a similar voice, and create music from a description. ElevenLabs is a leader in voices, and Suno is the best-known music tool. Every major assistant also has a voice mode, so you can hold a spoken conversation with it while your hands are busy.

How working people use it.

- A truck driver has the AI assistant read his study material aloud and quiz him by voice between loads.
- A crew foreman gives the weekly safety talk in English and Spanish.
- A small business records a clear, professional phone greeting.
- A teacher makes audio versions of reading passages for students who learn better by listening.
- A podcaster adds a short music intro that she is allowed to use commercially.

Try it yourself: the weekly safety talk in two languages.

The situation. You run a small construction crew. Half the crew is more comfortable in Spanish, and the weekly safety talk loses them.

The words to type:

Write a two-minute safety talk for a residential construction crew on ladder safety: setting the angle, three points of contact, and never standing on the top two rungs. Plain, spoken language, like a foreman talking to his crew at 7 a.m. Then give me the same talk in Spanish as it would be said on a job site in Texas. Mark anything I should double-check with OSHA's guidance on ladders.

Then paste each version into a voice tool to produce an audio file the crew can replay on their phones.

What to check. Have a bilingual crew member listen to the Spanish version before you play it for everyone. Check the safety facts against OSHA's own ladder guidance.

A rule that matters. Never copy someone else's voice without their clear permission. Reputable tools ask you to prove consent before they will clone a voice, and scammers use cloned voices to call families pretending to be a relative in trouble. A family code word that only your household knows is a simple defense.

On music. Free tiers of music tools are usually for personal use only. Suno's paid tiers include commercial rights, ElevenLabs licenses its music by tier, and whether purely AI-made music can be copyrighted at all is still unsettled. For anything you sell or broadcast, read the tier's terms first.

Push it further. Ask it to turn the talk into five quick questions you can ask the crew at the end, in both languages, so you know the message landed.

What it costs to start. Voice modes in assistants are free or included. Dedicated voice and music tools have free tiers and paid tiers starting at a few dollars a month.

How it expands your reach. Translation, narration and accessibility work all grow with these tools. Within your own job, a bilingual worker who can produce clear training audio in two languages makes sure the whole crew hears the message, and any employer with a mixed workforce values that.

7. Slides, documents and design

What it is. Design tools turn an outline or a rough idea into finished slides, one-page handouts, brochures, resumes and simple app screens. Gamma builds presentations and web pages from a prompt. Canva has AI built into its design tools. Google Slides works with Gemini, PowerPoint works with Copilot, and Figma's AI tools sketch app screens from a description.

How working people use it.

- A sales representative builds a ten-slide pitch for a prospect from her call notes.
- A project coordinator turns a status update into four clean slides for leadership.
- A cleaning company owner makes a one-page brochure for office buildings.
- A job seeker lays out a resume that reads cleanly on a phone screen.
- A restaurant owner redesigns the menu after a price change.

Try it yourself: a proposal to win a contract.

The situation. You own a small commercial cleaning business and want the cleaning contract for a three-story office building. The property manager asked for a short proposal by Friday.

Step one, the thinking. In your AI assistant:

I own a commercial cleaning company with 9 employees. I want to win the nightly cleaning contract for a three-story, 40,000-square-foot office building. The property manager cares most about reliability, because the last company missed nights. Here are my notes on our services, our insurance, three current clients and our

pricing approach. Draft the outline for a ten-slide proposal: what goes on each slide, the one sentence the manager should remember from each, and where I need a number or a photo. Ask me any questions first.

Step two, the design. Paste the approved outline into a design tool and ask for a clean, professional style in your company colors. Replace stock photos with real photos of your team at work wherever you can.

What to check. Every number, every client name and every promise. Make sure you have each current client's permission before naming them. Check that stock images are licensed for business use and that the text is large enough to read when the slides are printed.

Push it further. Ask it to play the property manager and raise the three toughest objections to your proposal, then practice your answers before the meeting.

What it costs to start. Most design tools have free tiers with limits on AI use, and paid tiers in the range of \$10 to \$20 a month.

How it expands your reach. The person who can turn a messy set of notes into a clear, good-looking story gets put in front of customers and leaders, and small companies that present well win bigger work.

8. Numbers and spreadsheets

What it is. You can upload a spreadsheet to most assistants and ask questions about it in plain words. Behind the scenes, the better tools write and run small pieces of code to do the math, which is more reliable than having the AI calculate in its head. They can find patterns, build charts, flag rows that look wrong and explain what changed between two months. Copilot works inside Excel, and Gemini works inside Google Sheets.

How working people use it.

- A restaurant owner finds which dishes make money and which ones lose it.
- An accounts payable clerk finds possible duplicate invoices in a year of payments.
- A property manager sees which buildings generate the most repair calls and for what.
- A teacher looks at grade trends across a semester.
- A family tracks spending against a budget and sees where the money went.

Try it yourself: which dishes lose money?

The situation. You own a small diner. Food costs went up and you suspect a few items on the menu now lose money, but you do not know which.

What you need. Three months of sales by menu item from your register system, and a list of ingredients and current costs for each dish. Take out anything about individual customers.

The words to type:

I am uploading two files: three months of sales by menu item, and ingredient costs per dish. For each dish, calculate the food cost per plate, the food cost as a percentage of the menu price, and the total profit after food cost over the three months. Rank the dishes from most to least profitable and make a bar chart. Flag any dish where food cost is above 35% of the price. Show me how you calculated one dish step by step so I can check your method, and tell me if any rows in my files look wrong or incomplete.

What to check. Work out two or three dishes by hand and compare. Check that the total sales in the AI's answer match the total in your register report. AI tools can misread a column, especially when a spreadsheet has merged cells or notes in the margins. Precise math is one of the places where these tools can be confidently wrong, so the step-by-step check is part of the job.

Push it further. "Suggest three ways to bring the worst two dishes under 35%, with what each change would do to the plate cost."

Then decide for yourself; you know your customers.

What it costs to start. Spreadsheet uploads and analysis work in most free tiers with limits. The tools built into Excel and Sheets usually come with a paid tier.

How it expands your reach. Every team has someone who becomes "the numbers person," and that person gets asked into decisions. You can become that person without a degree in math, and the chapter on organizing information and data shows the first steps.

9. Building software without being a programmer

What it is. You can now describe a small app in plain words and have AI build it. People call this "vibe coding." Some tools hide the code completely: you describe what you want, watch it appear and keep asking for changes. Lovable, Replit, Bolt and v0 work that way. Others work with the code directly and suit people willing to learn a little: Claude Code, Cursor, GitHub Copilot and OpenAI's Codex. Most assistants can also build a simple one-page tool, such as a calculator or a checklist, right inside the chat.

How working people use it.

- A handyman builds a quote calculator he can use on his phone in a customer's kitchen.
- A landscaping crew lead builds a simple job tracker with addresses, dates and photos.
- A tutor builds a flashcard app for her students.
- An office manager automates a weekly report that used to take two hours of copying and pasting.
- A nonprofit volunteer builds a sign-up page for an event.

Try it yourself: a painting quote calculator.

The situation. You paint houses. Quoting takes you twenty minutes of math on a notepad, and customers want a number before you leave.

The words to type:

Build me a simple web app I can use on my phone to quote interior painting jobs. I enter each room's length, width and ceiling height, the number of doors and windows, how many coats, and whether ceilings and trim are included. It should calculate wall area minus doors and windows, gallons of paint needed at 350 square feet per gallon per coat, paint cost at a price I can change, labor hours at a rate I can change, and a total. Show a simple itemized summary I can show the customer. Before you build anything, ask me any questions, then describe what you will build in a few lines and wait for my OK.

What to check. Test it against three jobs you already quoted by hand. If the numbers differ, ask it to show the formula it used and fix the one that is wrong. Do not collect customer names, addresses or payments in an app like this until someone who understands security has reviewed it. These tools are quick at the first 70 or 80% of an app and often stall on the last part, which is where a developer can help.

Push it further. Once the calculator works, ask it to add a button that turns the quote into a short, friendly text message you can send the customer from the driveway.

What it costs to start. Most of these tools have free tiers, and paid tiers commonly start around \$20 to \$25 a month. Usage-based billing can add up when a project runs long, so watch your credits.

How it expands your reach. Small businesses need small tools, and very few can afford custom software. The person who can build a quote calculator, a booking page or a tracker for their own team saves everyone time every week, and the chapter on building products and services picks up from here.

10. Meetings, calls and notes

What it is. Transcription and note-taking tools record a meeting or a call, turn it into text, and then summarize it into decisions, action items and open questions. They are built into Zoom, Microsoft

Teams and Google Meet, and there are standalone tools such as Otter. In medicine, "ambient scribe" tools listen to a doctor's visit, with the patient's consent, and draft the clinical note. One large medical group estimated its doctors saved more than 15,000 hours of documentation this way across 2.5 million patient visits.

How working people use it.

- A project manager gets a clean list of who agreed to do what, by when.
- A sales representative captures what a customer asked for without typing during the call.
- A student records a lecture and turns it into study notes.
- A nurse documents through the hospital's approved tool, never a personal app.
- A volunteer board secretary turns a two-hour meeting into minutes.

Try it yourself: a meeting that ends with clear next steps.

The words to type, after pasting a meeting transcript:

Here is the transcript of today's 45-minute team meeting. List the decisions made, the action items with the person responsible and the due date, and the questions still open. If a task was mentioned but nobody agreed to own it, list it separately. Then draft a short follow-up email to the team that confirms the action items. Use the names exactly as they appear in the transcript.

What to check. Make sure the right name is attached to each task, since transcripts mix up speakers. Watch for jokes or side comments that got turned into decisions. Before you record anyone, get their agreement. Recording laws vary by state, and some states, including California, require everyone on the call to agree.

Push it further. Paste last month's meeting transcript too, and ask which of today's decisions conflict with what the team agreed before.

What it costs to start. Basic transcription is built into most meeting tools and phones. Standalone note-takers have free tiers with monthly limits.

How it expands your reach. The person who reliably turns a meeting into clear next steps becomes the person who runs the meetings, and the one the team trusts to keep work on track.

11. Agents that act for you

What it is. An agent does tasks on the web for you. You describe the goal, and it opens a browser, searches, compares, fills in forms, gathers results into a table, and in some cases adds items to a cart or books a table, while you watch. ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude and Meta's new Muse agent all offer agent features, mostly on paid tiers, and there are AI web browsers built around the same idea, such as Perplexity's Comet and OpenAI's Atlas.

How working people use it.

- An office manager compares prices on the same printer toner across five suppliers.
- A job seeker gathers every matching posting within 25 miles into one table.
- A grant writer has an agent pull the requirements from six foundation websites into a checklist.
- A busy parent compares summer camp dates, prices and pickup times.

Try it yourself: a supplier price check.

The words to type:

Check the current prices for these eight office supplies on the websites of [five suppliers]: [list each item with its size or pack count]. Put them in a table with the price per unit, shipping cost, delivery time, any minimum order and the link for each. Flag the cheapest supplier overall and any item where one supplier is far cheaper. Do not order anything, create any accounts or enter any of

my information. If any step would send, submit or sign up for something, stop and ask me first.

What to check. Open a few links to confirm each price is current and matches the same item and size. Agents can misread a page or pick up an old listing.

The rules that keep you safe. Never give an agent your passwords, card numbers or Social Security number to type in. Watch it work, especially the first few times. Websites can contain hidden text written to trick an agent into doing something you did not ask for, which is one more reason to keep it away from your bank, email and work accounts unless you are watching every step. Tell it plainly where to stop, as in the example above.

Push it further. Give it last year's order quantities and ask what the office would save in a year by switching, with the math shown.

What it costs to start. Agent features are mostly on paid tiers, often with a monthly limit on tasks.

How it expands your reach. Small businesses are full of repeated web chores: checking prices, gathering leads, filling in the same supplier forms. The person who learns to hand those chores to an agent safely, with a person approving every step that matters, gives the whole team hours back each week.

12. Automations that connect your tools

What it is. Most of the tools in this chapter work one at a time: you ask, and they answer. Automation tools connect them, so work moves from one app to the next without you copying and pasting. You set a trigger, such as "when someone fills in my website form," and then the steps that follow, such as "add a row to my spreadsheet, have AI draft a reply, and text me to approve it." Zapier, Make and Microsoft Power Automate are the best known, and n8n is a free, open-source option for people willing to set it up themselves. Most of them now let you describe the automation in plain words and build a first version for you.

Watch this kind of tool closely, because it shows where the world is moving. AI tools are shifting from answering questions to carrying out work, and the person's job is shifting from doing each step to designing the steps and checking the result. One person with a few connected tools can now run work that used to need a small team.

How working people use it.

- A landscaping company owner gets every website inquiry added to a spreadsheet and a text on his phone within a minute.
- A bookkeeper has every invoice sent to one email address read, logged in a spreadsheet and flagged when the amount looks unusual.
- A teacher turns quiz results from a form into gradebook entries and a short note to each parent, which she reviews before it goes out.
- A real estate agent gets a drafted follow-up email for every open house sign-in, waiting for her approval.
- A volunteer coordinator sends shift reminders the day before, every week, without lifting a finger.

Try it yourself: never lose a customer inquiry again.

The situation. You run a small cleaning business. Inquiries come in through the form on your website. Some get an answer within an hour, some within three days, and a few never get one. Each lost inquiry is a lost job.

What you need. A free account on an automation tool, the form tool you already use (Google Forms, Microsoft Forms or your website's own form), a spreadsheet, and your phone.

What you know going in. An automation does exactly what you set it to do, every time, including the wrong thing. Start with one simple flow, test it with made-up entries, and add steps only after the first one works.

The words to type, in the automation tool's AI builder:

When someone submits my website contact form, add their name, phone, email, the service they asked for and their message as a new row in my "Inquiries" spreadsheet, with today's date. Then use AI to draft a friendly two-sentence reply that thanks them, confirms the service they asked about and says I will call within one business day. Send the draft to me as a phone notification so I can approve or edit it. Never send anything to a customer without my approval.

What comes back. A draft automation laid out as a chain of steps you can click to change.

What to check. Submit three test inquiries with made-up details and follow each one all the way through. Make sure nothing reaches a customer without your approval, the spreadsheet columns line up, and the AI draft never promises a price or a date. Check where the automation tool stores your data, and never collect card numbers or other sensitive details in the form.

Push it further. Add a step that checks the spreadsheet every morning and texts you any inquiry older than one day that still has no reply.

What it costs to start. The major automation tools have free tiers with a monthly limit on how many steps run. Zapier's free tier, for example, allows two-step automations and a limited number of tasks a month. Paid tiers commonly start at about \$20 to \$30 a month. If your employer already pays for Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace, some automation may already be included.

How it expands your reach. Every business is full of steps someone does by copying and pasting. The person who can spot those steps, connect the tools and keep a person approving the parts that matter becomes the one the team counts on to keep work moving. The chapters on skills everyone shares build on this one.

Every tool is also a teacher

Across all twelve kinds of tools there is one use that matters more than the rest. Any of them will teach you how to use it, and the AI assistants will teach you almost anything else.

When I want to learn something new, I ask the AI to teach me one step at a time, check my understanding and quiz me. You can do the same with a request like this:

I want to learn how to build a pivot table in Excel. I know basic formulas and nothing else. Teach me one small step at a time using an example about monthly sales by store. After each step, give me a short task to try, wait for my answer, and correct me before moving on.

Swap in whatever you want to learn: reading a profit and loss statement, the basics of medical terminology, how a home electrical panel works, conversational Spanish for a job site. A patient teacher who never gets tired of your questions is now available at any hour, and most of the time it is free.

What every toolmaker's own advice agrees on

Each AI company publishes its own guide to asking well, and they use different words for the same ideas.

Google teaches four parts for Gemini: **persona** (who you are), **task** (what you need), **context** (the background) and **format** (how the answer should look).

Microsoft teaches four parts for Copilot: **goal**, **context**, **source** (which documents or emails to draw on) and **expectations** (how the response should be shaped).

OpenAI's and Anthropic's guides cover the same ground and add a few habits of their own: be clear and direct, give examples of what good looks like, break a large job into steps, give the model room to think before it answers, and review what comes back.

Put side by side, almost every guide comes down to the same six things, and the chapter on asking well later in this part covers them in depth:

What to include	Google's word	Microsoft's word	In plain terms
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Who you are and who it is for	Persona	Context	"I'm a shift lead writing for new hires."
What you need done	Task	Goal	One clear job per request.
The background	Context	Context	Why you need it, what has happened so far.
What to work from	Context	Source	The notes, file or data to use.
What the answer should look like	Format	Expectations	Length, tone, layout, language.
How to proceed			Ask first, tell me the plan, wait for my OK.

The last row in the table is my own addition, drawn from how I work. I add it to almost every bigger request, because it keeps me in charge of the work and stops the tool from running ahead on a wrong guess.

Pictures and video need a different kind of detail, because the tool is building something you will look at. For those, describe the subject, the action, the setting, the style, the light, the framing or camera movement, any sound, the length or size, and anything to leave out.

One finding from Google's guide surprised me. In its early testing, the requests that worked best averaged about 21 words. Mine are often much longer, because I include the background the tool needs. When you are starting out, write the full request with all six parts. Once you have saved a profile, which the next chapter shows you how to do, the tool already knows who you are and how you like to work, and your requests can get shorter.

Where to start

You do not need twelve tools. Pick by what you want to get done.

If you want to...	Start with...
Write, explain or think something through	An AI assistant (section 1)
Find out what is true and where it came from	A research tool (section 2)

Learn a manual, a course or a pile of documents	A study partner (section 3)
Make a flyer, a product photo or an illustration	An image tool (section 4)
Teach a process or explain something on screen	Your phone camera plus a video editor (section 5)
Reach people in another language, or listen while you work	Voice and audio tools (section 6)
Win a customer or brief a leader	A design tool (section 7)
Understand your numbers	Spreadsheet analysis (section 8)
Stop doing the same calculation or chore by hand	A vibe coding tool (section 9)
Leave every meeting with clear next steps	A note-taker (section 10)
Hand off a repeated web chore	An agent, watched closely (section 11)
Stop copying and pasting between apps	An automation tool (section 12)

Start free. Use one tool for real work for two weeks before you pay for anything, and when you do pay, one paid tier is usually enough at first. Most people who end up paying for three subscriptions only ever use one.

How the tools work together: Dana's ninety days

Dana is a composite, built from the kinds of roles and small businesses described in this chapter to show how the tools combine.

Dana was the office assistant at a family-owned landscaping company with twelve employees. She answered the phone, scheduled estimates, sent invoices and kept the owner's calendar. When the owner mentioned that the company's website had not been updated in years and that he could not afford a marketing agency, Dana asked whether she could try something.

The first month: learn and listen. Dana set up her AI assistant with a short profile of the company and how she wanted answers written. She loaded the company's price sheet, service list and two years of customer reviews into a study partner and asked what customers praised most and complained about most. The answer surprised the owner: customers loved the crew's reliability and

hated not knowing when the crew would arrive. Dana had been answering those calls for years without seeing the pattern.

The second month: make things. Dana used an image tool to create "before and after" design concepts for three types of yards, clearly labeled as concepts, to show homeowners during estimates. She filmed the crew on two jobs with her phone and used a video editor to cut a 60-second clip for social media, with the owner's permission and the crew's. She used her AI assistant to rewrite the website's service pages in plain language. Then she used a vibe coding tool to build a simple text-message reminder that told customers the day before when the crew would arrive, which went straight to the top complaint.

The third month: show the numbers. Dana uploaded a year of estimates and jobs into her AI assistant and asked how many estimates turned into jobs, how long that took, and how the numbers changed after the reminder messages started. She turned the answer into a five-slide summary with a design tool and showed it to the owner. Calls asking "when is the crew coming?" had dropped, and two new customers said they found the company through the video.

The owner gave Dana a new title, marketing and operations coordinator, with a raise, and moved the phone work to a part-time hire. Six months later, two other small businesses that had seen the company's videos asked Dana whether she could do the same for them. She now does that on weekends for a flat monthly fee.

Dana got there without learning to code or going back to school. She used the tools in this chapter as a toolbox, one job at a time, and she kept her boss informed at every step. The field and skill chapters that follow show how the same tools fit specific kinds of work.

What none of these tools will do for you

Every tool in this chapter can be wrong in a confident voice. Every one of them changes, and some will disappear. None of them can take responsibility for what you send, give consent on someone

else's behalf, or decide what is fair to a customer. Those stay with you.

I call this the **Decision Line**. On one side sits everything AI can do for you: the research, the reading, the first drafts, the numbers and the paperwork. On the other side sit the decisions about money, about health and about a person's mind, and every promise you make to a customer. Those stay with people. A financial advisor can let AI do the research and still make the call with the client. A nurse can let it draft the notes and still decide what the patient needs. The people who gain the most from AI are the ones who hand it the legwork and spend the time they get back on their side of the line, with the people they serve. They see more clients, answer more questions and do more with less.

The chapter on asking well and staying safe covers the rules in more detail. Four of them apply to every tool here. Check every fact, number and name before it leaves your hands. Keep personal, customer and confidential work information out of personal accounts. Get permission before you use anyone's face, voice or words. Keep copies of what you make, outside the tool.

Your next step

Pick three tools from this chapter: one you already use, one that fits your work, and one that looks like fun. Try each one this week on something real, using the worked example from its section as your starting point.

Before you do, spend fifteen minutes on the next chapter. Every tool in this chapter gives better results once it knows who you are, what you do and how you like to work, and the next chapter shows how to set that up once so you never have to explain yourself from scratch again.

Behind this chapter

The tools named in this chapter were checked against product pages, news reports and independent reviews. Names, prices and

limits change often, and the companion page at thinkmorphic.com/climb carries the current list.

- **Gallup on AI at work.** Gallup surveyed 23,717 U.S. employees between February 4 and February 19, 2026, and found that 50% used AI at work in some way. The 2023 comparison figure of 21% comes from the Associated Press report on Gallup's earlier survey.
- **The video app shutdown.** OpenAI announced on March 24, 2026 that it was discontinuing its Sora app and API, as reported by Axios, and told users how to save their videos.
- **Meta's Muse models and privacy.** Axios reported Meta's launch of Muse Spark in April 2026 and noted that Meta's privacy policy sets few limits on how it can use data shared with its AI. Meta released its stronger Muse Wonder model on October 12, 2026, behind paid plans, as reported by TechCrunch.
- **New models on paid tiers first.** Google released Gemini 4 Argon to trusted cyber defenders first, then to Google AI Pro and Ultra subscribers on October 13, 2026, according to Google's own posts. From October 9, Google limited its free Gemini app to its lightest model, as reported by PPC Land.
- **DeepSeek.** TechCrunch and CFO Dive reported DeepSeek's statement that it stores user data on servers in China and listed the agencies, states and countries that blocked it on government devices.
- **Medical scribes.** The Permanente Medical Group's estimate of 15,791 hours of documentation saved across 2.5 million patient encounters, as reported by the American Medical Association.
- **Vendor prompting guides.** Google's Prompting Guide 101 for Gemini (persona, task, context, format, and the 21-word finding), Microsoft's guidance for Copilot (goal, context, source, expectations), and the prompt engineering guides from OpenAI and Anthropic.

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Chapter 2: Teach AI Who You Are

The fifteen minutes of setup that make every request in this book work better

Imagine a temp worker who shows up at your desk every morning. They are smart, fast and willing, and they forget everything about you overnight. Every day you explain who you are, what the job is, who the customers are and how you like things done. By the time you finish explaining, you could have done half the work yourself.

Most people use AI that way. They open a fresh chat, type a short request and get an answer written for nobody in particular. The answer is generic because the request gave the tool nothing to work with. Then they decide AI is not much use for their job.

Every major AI tool now has a place where you can tell it, once, who you are and how you want it to work. Some tools also remember what you have told them across conversations. When you set this up, the temp worker stops forgetting. Your short requests start getting answers written for your job, your customers and your way of working.

I learned this slowly. My first instructions were a few lines about who I am and how I like answers written. Every time the AI got something wrong in the same way twice, I added a line. Over many months my instructions grew past two hundred lines, and I now keep several separate modes for different kinds of work: one for writing to busy executives, one for teaching, one for checking numbers, and my favorite, a mode for thinking deeply about a hard decision. You do not need two hundred lines. You need six to start, and the habit of adding one when the tool keeps making the same mistake.

This chapter shows you how to set up your AI tools. If you skip it, every request in the rest of this book will still work, but you will

spend more time explaining yourself and fixing answers that missed the point.

The same question, two answers

Here is a request a lot of people make:

Help me write a message asking my manager for Friday off.

With no setup, a typical answer comes back as a formal email, about 150 words long, with a subject line, a polite opening paragraph, an offer to "ensure a smooth handover" and a closing line thanking the manager for their consideration. The message is fine, and it sounds nothing like you, which your manager would notice right away.

Now give the tool six lines about yourself first:

I work the front desk at a busy dental office with four dentists. My manager is the office manager, and we talk by text, never by email. I write short, friendly and direct. No corporate language. I am in my second year here and I have not taken a day off since March. When a request is unclear, ask me one question before you write.

Ask the same question, and the tool asks back: "Do you want to mention who will cover the front desk?" You answer that Maria offered to cover. What comes back is something like this:

Hi Linda, could I take this Friday off? Maria said she can cover the front desk, and I'll make sure Thursday's confirmations are all done before I leave. Thanks!

Same question, same tool. The second answer took you five seconds to send. The difference is that the tool knew who was asking. The same setup carries into bigger jobs: a week of messages, a schedule or a report comes back in your voice on the first try instead of the third.

What to tell AI: five layers

You can build your setup in five layers. Start with the first two. Add the others as you go.

Layer 1: Who you are

A few sentences about your job, your workplace and the people you write for. Every answer needs this context, and almost nobody gives it.

- Your role and what your day mostly involves.
- The kind of place you work, in general terms: "a small family-owned landscaping company," "a 300-bed hospital," "a regional trucking company."
- Who reads what you write: customers, patients, your manager, your crew, a client.
- Anything about your situation that changes the answer, such as "English is my second language," "I am studying for a certification," or "I am looking for a new job."

Leave out names of real customers, patients or coworkers, and anything your employer treats as confidential. "A small dental office" tells the tool everything it needs.

Layer 2: How you want answers

This layer stops the tool from writing in a voice that is not yours.

- Length: "Keep answers short unless I ask for detail."
- Tone: "Friendly and direct," "Plain words, no buzzwords," "Professional but warm."
- Format: "Use short bullet points for steps," "Give me text I can paste into a text message," "No headings for short answers."
- Language and spelling: "American English," or "Give me Spanish and English versions of anything for the crew."
- Words and habits to avoid: if the tool keeps using a phrase or a style you never would, tell it to stop.

Layer 3: Working rules

These are the lines that make the tool safer and more honest with you. They matter most when the work matters.

- "Before a bigger task, ask me your questions first, then tell me your plan in a few lines and wait for my OK."
- "If you are not sure about a fact, say so. Never make up names, numbers, dates or quotes."
- "Separate what you know from what you are assuming."
- "If you think I am wrong, tell me and explain why."

That last line deserves a word. AI tools tend to agree with the person using them. If you tell yours to push back, it will catch mistakes you would otherwise send out with your name on them. Never set up your tool to flatter you or to always agree. You will get worse answers, and you will not know it.

Layer 4: Modes for jobs you repeat

Once your basic setup is working, you will notice that some kinds of work need a different approach. Writing to a busy executive needs the conclusion first and nothing extra. Teaching a new hire needs patience and examples. Thinking through a big decision needs the tool to slow down and look for what you missed.

Instead of explaining that every time, you can save each one as a mode. Different tools call these by different names, which the table later in this chapter lists. If your tool has no place to save modes, keep each one in a note on your phone and paste it at the start of a chat. I keep mine as short text files, so I can carry them from one tool to another.

Here is my favorite, written so you can use it yourself. I call it think-deep:

Think-deep mode. Use this when I am working through a decision, a plan or a problem with real consequences. Complete your analysis before you give me a conclusion. Check every number, date and total. Separate confirmed facts from assumptions and from your own interpretation. Point out anything that conflicts, anything missing, and any conclusion the evidence does not support. Then tell me the weak assumptions in my thinking, other explanations I may have missed, the people who might object and

why, the risks and what this depends on, the second-order effects, what happens if I do nothing, and what could get in the way of doing it. Do not invent decisions, dates, owners or approvals. End with your conclusion and how sure you are of it.

Think-deep turns the tool from an answer machine into a thinking partner that argues with you. I use it before any decision I would hate to get wrong: a job offer, a big purchase, a plan I am about to put in front of other people.

A few other modes worth setting up:

- **Boss-ready.** "Lead with the conclusion. Focus on cost, schedule, people and risk. Write for a busy manager who will read the first three lines. Keep it short enough to paste into an email or a chat message."
- **Teach me.** "Teach me one small step at a time. Use an everyday example. After each step, give me a short exercise, wait for my answer and correct me before moving on."
- **Check my work.** "Review what I paste for errors, gaps, unclear sentences and anything a skeptical reader would question. List the problems in order of importance. Do not rewrite it unless I ask."
- **Customer-ready.** "Write for a customer who is not an expert and may be upset. Acknowledge the problem once, explain in plain words, say exactly what happens next and when."

Layer 5: Memory

Many tools can now remember things about you across conversations, either because you asked them to ("Remember that I work night shifts") or because they picked up details from earlier chats. Memory makes your setup grow on its own.

It also means the tool can hold on to things you would rather it forgot, or facts that are no longer true. Three habits keep memory working for you:

- **Ask what it remembers.** In most tools, you can type "What do you remember about me?" and get a list. Do it once a month, and

read the list the way you would read your own resume: fix anything out of date, add what has changed, such as a new project, a new manager or a goal you are working toward, and delete what no longer applies. The tool can only work from what it knows, and your work changes faster than you think. I rely on memory heavily, since my AI assistant picks up ongoing projects where we left off, and the habit I was slowest to build was this monthly check of what it had stored.

- **Correct and delete.** Say "Forget that" or "Update that: I moved to the day shift," or open the memory settings and delete what you do not want kept.
- **Use a temporary chat for anything sensitive.** Most tools offer a private or temporary chat that is not saved to memory. Use it for one-off questions you do not want shaping future answers.

Your employer's AI tool may have memory turned off, or may handle it differently. Follow your company's rules for anything work-related.

Your first six lines

Here is a template. Fill in the brackets, paste it into your tool's personalization settings, and you are set up.

About me: I work as [your job] at [the kind of place you work]. My day is mostly [the three or four things that take most of your time]. I usually write for [who reads your work].

How I want answers: [Short or detailed], [tone], in [language]. Give me [the format you use most: text messages, emails, checklists, bullet points].

Before you start: If my request is unclear, ask me up to three questions first. For bigger tasks, tell me your plan in a few lines and wait for my OK.

Accuracy: Never make up names, numbers, dates or quotes. Tell me when you are guessing.

Push back: If you think I am wrong or missing something, tell me.

Privacy: I will not share customer, patient or account details with you, so do not ask for them.

Two filled-in examples

An office assistant:

About me: I work as the office assistant at a family-owned landscaping company with twelve employees. My day is mostly answering calls, scheduling estimates, sending invoices and keeping the owner's calendar. I usually write for homeowners and for the owner.

How I want answers: Short, friendly and plain, in American English. Give me text I can paste into a text message or a short email.

Before you start: If my request is unclear, ask me up to three questions first. For bigger tasks, tell me your plan in a few lines and wait for my OK.

Accuracy: Never make up names, numbers, dates or quotes. Tell me when you are guessing.

Push back: If you think I am wrong or missing something, tell me.

Privacy: I will not share customer addresses or payment details with you, so do not ask for them.

A self-employed handyman:

About me: I run a one-person handyman business. Most jobs are small repairs, painting and fixture installs for homeowners. I spend my time on jobs, quoting, buying materials and answering customer texts. I am good with my hands and slow at paperwork.

How I want answers: Very short. Use plain words and numbers. Give me quotes and messages I can send from my phone. Spanish and English when I ask.

Before you start: If my request is unclear, ask me one question first.

Accuracy: Show your math on anything to do with materials or money. Tell me when you are guessing.

Push back: If my price looks too low for the work, tell me.

Privacy: I will not share customer addresses or card details with you.

The deep dives later in this book each end with a starter profile for that job, and the skill chapters show versions for different kinds of work, so you can begin with something closer to your own work and adjust it.

Where each tool keeps your setup

Every major assistant has a place for your setup, and most have a place for modes and memory. The names change often, so the companion page at thinkmorphic.com/climb keeps the current list, but this table will get you started.

Tool	Your basic setup	Modes for repeated jobs	Memory
ChatGPT	Custom instructions, under Personalization	Projects, and custom GPTs	Saved memories, which you can view and delete under Personalization
Claude	Instructions for Claude, under Settings	Projects with their own instructions, and skills	Memory of past chats, which you can turn on or off
Gemini	Personal context settings	Gems, which Google is turning into Skills from November 2026; Skills are free on personal accounts	Memory of past chats, under Personal context, on by default
Microsoft Copilot	Custom instructions, under Chat settings and Personalization	Varies by version and by what your employer has enabled	Copilot Memory, which you can review in the same settings
Meta AI, Grok, Perplexity and others	Look for "personalization," "instructions" or "profile" in settings	Varies	Varies; ask the tool what it remembers

Two tips apply to every tool. First, after you save your setup, start a new chat and ask, "What do you know about how I want you to work?" If the answer does not match what you wrote, the setup did not save. Second, if your setup is long, the tool may follow the first lines more closely than the last ones, so put the rules that matter most at the top.

Put AI in your pocket

Every major assistant in this book has a free app for both iPhone and Android. Download the one you set up and sign in with the same account, and your setup and memory come with you. You carry your phone everywhere, so your AI assistant is always within reach: in the truck between jobs, in the break room, on the walk to the bus.

Most of these apps also let you talk instead of type. Tap the microphone or the voice button and speak the way you would to a coworker. A messy problem you can explain out loud in thirty seconds might take five minutes to type, and most apps can answer out loud too, so you can work through a question hands-free. For many people, voice is the quickest way to get more done with AI, and it is already on the phone in your pocket.

Talk to it the way you would in a public place. People nearby can hear you, and the same rules about customer and patient details apply when you speak as when you type. If you are driving, pull over first.

What never goes in

Your setup and your memory are stored by the company that makes the tool. Keep them free of anything you would not want a stranger to read.

- Account numbers, card numbers, Social Security numbers and passwords.
- Health details you would not put on a form you hand to a stranger.

- Names and details of customers, patients, students or clients.
- Private information about your family, friends or coworkers.
- Anything your employer treats as confidential: pay, plans, contracts, internal numbers.

A useful test: if this setup were printed and pinned to the break room wall, would you be comfortable? If not, take the line out.

How your setup grows

The best setups are built over time, one correction at a time. Here is the habit that built mine.

When the tool gets something wrong in the same way twice, add a line to your setup so it does not happen a third time. Keep the line short and specific. A few lines that came from real corrections in my own setup:

- "Write in American spelling," after it kept giving me British spelling for an American audience.
- "Do not use long dashes," after readers told me those dashes made my writing look machine-made.
- "When you change one thing in a document, check the whole document for the same problem," after a fix in one place left the same mistake everywhere else.
- "Avoid sentences built as 'It is not this. It is that,'" after someone pointed out how often this pattern showed up in my drafts.

Every month or two, read your whole setup from top to bottom. Remove lines that no longer apply, combine lines that say the same thing, and move the most important rules to the top. A setup that grows without pruning starts to contradict itself, and the tool gets confused the same way a new employee would with a handbook full of old rules.

What a setup cannot do

A good setup saves time and gets you answers that sound like you. A vague request stays vague, so you still need to say what you

want. The tool can still be wrong, so you still check every fact, number and name. Your judgment about what to send, to whom and when also stays yours. The same holds for every tool in this book.

Your fifteen minutes

- Open the AI tool you use most and find its personalization or instructions setting.
- Fill in the six-line template from this chapter and save it.
- Start a new chat and ask, "What do you know about how I want you to work?" Fix anything it got wrong.
- Ask it something you asked last week, and compare the answers.
- Keep a running list called "AI fixes." Each time you correct the tool, capture the correction by voice instead of typing: use your phone's voice typing in a note, or keep one chat in your AI app just for fixes and dictate each one there. Once a week, move the ones that keep coming up into your setup. Then put a monthly reminder on your calendar to ask your AI assistant what it remembers about you and your work, and correct anything out of date.

Then turn to the chapters on your field and the skills you use most. Every request in them will work better because the tool now knows who is asking.

Behind this chapter

The before-and-after example in this chapter is illustrative. The two answers are typical of what the tools produce with and without a setup, written to show the difference; results vary by tool and by day. The feature names in the table come from each company's help pages and from recent reporting, checked as this chapter was written. The companion page keeps them current.

The habit of adding a line after repeated corrections, and the think-deep mode, come from my own practice. The vendor guidance on what to put in a setup is consistent across companies:

OpenAI suggests your role, preferred tone, output formats and guardrails; Microsoft suggests details about yourself and how you want responses formatted; Google suggests a role, the task, useful background and the output format for each Gem.

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Chapter 3: Asking Well and Staying Safe

How to ask so AI understands, how to check what comes back, and how to keep yourself and the people you serve out of trouble

Marcus runs the night shift at a distribution warehouse with 23 forklift drivers. His company gives supervisors an AI assistant that can read the training records, the shift schedule and the incident log, approved for exactly that work. On a slow Tuesday he asked AI: "Which of my drivers are due for their forklift evaluations in the next 60 days, and how do I fit the evaluations into next month's schedule without leaving a shift short?"

Within a minute the AI assistant had pulled the records, matched them against the schedule and handed him a plan: five drivers due, a quieter night for each evaluation, and who could cover each shift. Built by hand across three systems, that plan would have taken Marcus most of a night. Before he posted it, he asked one more question, the one this chapter is about: "How did you work out who is due?"

The answer showed its work. The AI assistant had counted three years from each driver's last evaluation, which matches the federal OSHA rule for powered industrial trucks. One of the five was a driver Marcus would have missed: the same rule requires a new evaluation after an accident or a near miss, and the incident log showed that driver backing into a storage rack in August. The AI assistant also flagged the one thing it could not confirm, a driver with no evaluation date in the system. Marcus found the signed form from March in a paper file, entered it, and posted the plan within the hour. He still uses the AI assistant every shift, and he now asks how it got there before any answer goes into a schedule, a safety record or a decision about a person.

The N in Draw the LINE means Never skip the check. The chapter covers how to ask so AI understands, how to check what comes back, how to stay safe and where the Decision Line sits in your own work.

Six things AI can do for you

Almost everything AI does for a working person today falls into six moves. Once you can see them, you start spotting them all through your week.

- **Read.** Summarize a long document, a thread of emails, a manual or a meeting, and pull out what matters. "Read this 40-page employee handbook and tell me what changed from last year's version, then draft a short note to my team about the changes that affect them."
- **Organize.** Sort, group and schedule, and turn a pile of notes into a plan or a list. "Here are my notes from three customer calls. Turn them into a list of follow-ups with who owns each one, and add my tasks to my calendar as reminders."
- **Draft.** Write the first version of an email, a report, a procedure, a post or a letter. "Draft a short note to tenants about the water shutoff on Tuesday, post it to the building's group chat once I approve it, and remind me Monday night to put up the lobby sign."
- **Analyze.** Work through numbers and patterns and explain them in plain words. "Here is our sales spreadsheet for six months. Which products are slipping, and by how much? Put it in a chart I can paste into Friday's update."
- **Prepare.** Get ready for an interview, an exam, an audit or a hard conversation, including practice. "Play a customer who is angry about a late delivery, and let me practice the call. Afterward, give me a one-page cheat sheet of what worked."
- **Check.** Review your work for gaps, errors and weak spots before it goes out. "Read this proposal as a skeptical buyer would, and tell me the three things you would push back on. Fix what you can and mark what only I can answer."

Asking so AI understands

The toolbox chapter showed that every AI company's guide to asking comes down to about six things. Here they are in more depth, with what each one changes in the answer.

Who you are, and who it is for. "I'm a dental office receptionist writing to a patient who is nervous about a procedure" gets a different answer from "write a message to a patient." Spell out both every time while you are learning.

What you need done. One clear job per request. "Summarize this and draft a reply and make a checklist" usually gets three half-done jobs. Ask for the summary first, then the reply, then the checklist, and the tool does each one properly.

The background. Why you need it and what has happened so far. "The customer has called three times, and we already refunded the shipping" changes the whole tone of a reply.

What to work from. Paste the notes, attach the file or point to the data. An answer built from your material is far more useful, and far easier to check, than one built from the tool's general knowledge.

What the answer should look like. Length, tone, layout and language. "Three sentences I can send by text" or "a one-page checklist I can print" saves you a round of fixing.

How to proceed. For anything bigger than a quick question, I add one line to almost every request: "Ask me your questions first, then tell me your plan in a few lines and wait for my OK." I call this habit Ask first, then go. It keeps you in charge of the work, and it stops the tool from running a long way down the wrong road on a guess.

The same request, asked two ways

Here is a request a property manager might send:

Write a notice about the parking lot.

What comes back is a generic notice about "upcoming parking lot maintenance" with no dates, a polite paragraph about "your patience and understanding," and a closing that thanks residents

for their cooperation. The notice is fine, and it answers none of the questions residents will call about.

Now the same request with the six parts:

I manage a 60-unit apartment building. Write a notice for residents, many of whom read English as a second language. The parking lot will be repaved on Thursday and Friday next week, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Residents can park on Elm Street, which the city has approved for those two days. Cars left in the lot will be towed at the owner's cost. Keep it under 120 words, in plain English, with the dates and the street name in bold, and add a Spanish version below it. Ask me if anything is unclear before you write it.

The tool asks one question back: whether residents with accessible parking permits have a separate spot. That question alone saves the property manager a dozen phone calls.

Talk it through

A request is the start of a conversation. The best results come from the second and third turns, when you tell the tool what to change. A few habits help.

- **Use your voice.** On your phone, explaining a messy situation out loud often gives the tool more useful background than you would ever type.
- **Give an example of what good looks like.** Paste one past email, quote or report that you liked and say, "Match this style."
- **Break big jobs into steps.** Outline first, then each section. Plan first, then the details.
- **Push it further.** "Shorter." "Warmer." "Now for a customer who is upset." "What did you leave out?"
- **Let it coach you.** After an answer, ask: "How could I have asked that better?" and "What should I learn next to do this kind of work?" The tool will tell you, and over a few weeks your requests get noticeably better.

Never skip the check

AI tools are wrong more often than their confident voice suggests, and they are wrong in ways that are easy to miss. Knowing the usual mistakes makes them easier to catch.

- **Confident wrong facts.** A rule, a date, a price or a policy that sounds right but is not.
- **Made-up sources.** Citations, quotes, studies and court cases that do not exist. In the 2023 case *Mata v. Avianca*, a federal judge in New York sanctioned lawyers who filed a brief citing court decisions an AI tool had invented. A database kept by the researcher Damien Charlotin had logged more than a thousand U.S. court cases involving AI-invented material by June 2026, about 40% of them involving lawyers.
- **Math done in its head.** Totals, percentages and conversions that are slightly off. Tools that run a small piece of code or a spreadsheet formula to do the math are more reliable, so ask for that.
- **Old information.** Every AI model is trained on information up to a cutoff date, so it may not know about a rule, price or product that changed after that date. Ask when its information is from, or use a research tool that searches the web and shows links.
- **Agreeing with you.** Ask a leading question, and the tool will often lean your way. The working rule from the setup chapter, "If you think I am wrong, tell me," helps here.
- **Missing context.** The tool does not know your company's policy, your state's rule or your customer's history unless you tell it. A tool connected to your records can only work from what is in them, which is why Marcus's assistant flagged the evaluation that lived on paper.

How to check, in practice

Checking means looking hard at the few things that would hurt if they were wrong. You rarely need to redo the whole piece.

- **Ask where it came from, then open the source.** Ask what it used and how it reached the answer, the way Marcus did, then open the record, rule or link it points to and read that part yourself.
- **Check every number, name, date and quote** against the original document, a calculator or the person it is about. These are the details that cause the most damage when they are wrong.
- **Read it as the person receiving it.** A customer, a patient or your manager will read the words differently from you. Read it once in their shoes before you send it.
- **Ask the tool to check itself.** "Go through your answer and list anything you are not sure of, and anything I should verify." It will often flag its own weak spots.
- **Get a second opinion on anything important.** Paste the answer into a different tool and ask what is wrong with it, or ask someone who knows.
- **Match the check to the stakes.** A birthday message needs a glance. A safety rule, a contract, a medication or anything with money attached needs the source.

When the tool makes the same mistake twice, add a line to your setup so it stops. The setup chapter calls this the Twice Rule, and it is how your checking gets easier over time.

Staying safe

The toolbox chapter gave four rules that apply to every tool. Here is what each one means in practice, plus two more.

Keep private information out of public tools

Anything you type into a personal AI account is stored by the company that runs it, and some free tools may use what you share to improve their products. Keep these out of personal accounts:

- Customer, patient, student and client names, details and records.

- Account numbers, card numbers, Social Security numbers and passwords.
- Anything your employer treats as confidential: pay, plans, contracts, prices, internal numbers.
- Private details about family, friends and coworkers.

When you need help with work that involves any of this, swap the details for made-up ones ("Customer A," "a 50-year-old patient," "a \$10,000 invoice"), or use the tool your employer has approved. In health care, patient information is protected by law under HIPAA, and in many jobs, customer data has rules of its own. If you are not sure what your workplace allows, ask before you paste.

Use work tools for work

Many employers now provide an approved AI tool, often a business version of Copilot, Gemini, ChatGPT or Claude, with protections that personal accounts do not have. Use it for work, follow its rules, and keep your personal account for personal things. If your employer has no approved tool and no policy, ask what is allowed before you use AI on anything with your company's name on it.

Get permission for faces, voices and words

Do not use anyone's photo, voice or words in something you make with AI without their permission, and never make anything that pretends to be a real person. Before you record a call or a meeting to feed into a note-taker, tell everyone on it. Some states, including California, require everyone on a call to agree before it is recorded.

Know the new scams

The same tools that help you also help scammers. With a few seconds of someone's voice from a social media video, a scammer can clone it and call a parent or grandparent in a fake emergency, asking for money. The Federal Trade Commission warns not to trust a voice on its own, to call the person back on a number you know, and to be suspicious of anyone asking for wire transfers, cryptocurrency or gift cards. The FBI suggests agreeing on a secret

word or phrase with your family so you can check who is calling. Set one up this week.

Keep your own copies

Tools change, and some disappear. Save anything you make, such as documents, images, videos and your setup, somewhere you control, outside the tool.

Keep people at the center of your own well-being

AI can explain a diagnosis in plain words, help you write a hard letter or talk through a decision late at night. When you are going through something heavy, talk to a person as well: a doctor, a counselor or a friend. In the United States, you can call or text 988 at any hour to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Where the Decision Line sits in your work

The toolbox chapter introduced the Decision Line. On one side is everything AI can do for you: the research, the reading, the first drafts, the numbers and the paperwork. On the other side are the decisions about money, about health and about a person's mind, and every promise you make to someone. Those stay with you.

Most tasks are easy to place. For the ones that are not, three questions help:

- Does this decide something about someone's money, health or state of mind?
- Does it make a promise to a customer, a patient, a student or a coworker?
- Would I be comfortable putting my name under it as it stands?

If the answer to either of the first two is yes, or the answer to the third is no, the decision is yours. AI can still prepare it, gather the facts, lay out the options and draft the words. You make the call.

Job	AI's side of the line	Your side of the line
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Bank teller	Explaining account options in plain words; drafting a follow-up letter	Approving an exception; spotting that a customer is being pressured by someone else
Home health aide	Turning voice notes into the visit log; a reminder list for the family	Noticing the patient is not herself today and calling the nurse
Warehouse supervisor	Drafting the safety talk; building the training schedule	Deciding who drives the forklift; stopping the line when something looks wrong
Teacher	A first draft of the quiz; three versions of a reading for different levels	The grade, the call home, and what a struggling student needs
Financial advisor	Research on funds; meeting notes; a plain-English summary for the client	The recommendation, and the conversation about what the client can live with

The people who gain the most from AI hand it the legwork and spend the time they get back on their side of the line, with the people they serve. My new mantra for AI is to do more with less. Leave the busy, mundane and long-running tasks to AI, keep the decisions for yourself, and use your time to drive results from what AI has done. AI runs the tasks. You run the results.

Your first week

Your work changes when you use AI on something from your own week. Here is one week, about fifteen minutes a day, on your phone if you like.

- **Day one: set it up.** If you skipped the setup chapter, do your six lines today, and download the app for the AI assistant you chose.
- **Day two: read.** Give it something long you have been avoiding, such as a policy, a manual or a long thread, and ask for the five things that matter to you.
- **Day three: draft.** Ask for the first version of a message you have to send this week, using the six parts from this chapter.
- **Day four: organize.** Say your to-do list out loud and ask it to sort the list by what is urgent, what is important and what can wait.

- **Day five: check.** Paste something you wrote and ask it to find the gaps. Then check one fact it gave you this week against the original source.
- **Day six: something for home.** A meal plan from what is in your fridge, a budget question, help with your child's homework. You learn the tool faster when you use it for your own life too.
- **Day seven: look back.** Ask the tool, "Based on what I asked you this week, what should I try next, and how could my requests be better?" Write down one thing that worked. That note is the start of your own playbook.

Next comes the E in Draw the LINE, which means Expand your reach. It starts with how your own world is changing, field by field.

Behind this chapter

Marcus is a composite. The forklift rule he checks is real: OSHA's standard for powered industrial trucks requires an evaluation of each operator's performance at least once every three years, with refresher training and a new evaluation after an accident or a near miss. His connected assistant is illustrative; what a workplace assistant can reach depends on how the employer sets it up. The six moves come from the earlier plan for this book. The court case figures come from a June 2026 reflection by the University of North Carolina law library, which cites Damien Charlotin's database. The scam advice comes from the Federal Trade Commission and the FBI. The before-and-after parking notice is written to illustrate, and results vary by tool.

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PART TWO

How Every World Is Changing

Construction and the Skilled Trades

Carpenters, plumbers, masons, electricians, HVAC technicians, welders, mechanics, and the people who run the jobs

Luis is a master plumber who runs a three-person shop. His days are spent under sinks, in crawl spaces and on job sites. His evenings are spent at the kitchen table writing quotes, chasing invoices and answering texts from customers who want to know when he can come. His apprentice, who is twenty-three, took a photo of a corroded valve last week, asked his phone what it was, and had the part number before Luis got back from the truck.

Luis is good at his trade and tired of the paperwork. He has also noticed that he cannot hire fast enough. Both of those things are about to matter more.

What is changing

AI cannot crawl under a house, bend conduit or lay a straight course of brick. The hands-on work of the trades is the part of the economy AI is furthest from doing. What AI is changing is everything around that work: the quoting, scheduling, ordering, invoicing, code lookups, manuals, safety paperwork and customer messages that eat a tradesperson's evenings.

At the same time, the trades need more people, and AI is one of the reasons. Associated Builders and Contractors estimates the construction industry must attract 349,000 net new workers in 2026 and 456,000 in 2027, mostly to replace people retiring. Data center construction has added demand for electricians in particular. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects electrician jobs will grow 9% from 2025 to 2035, much faster than average, with about 72,700 openings a year, and it names rising electricity demand from AI and

data centers as one of the reasons. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers says electrical work makes up 45% to 70% of the cost of building a data center, as reported by Fortune.

In plain terms, the technology that worries office workers is creating work for people who build things.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Electrician	Code lookups, load calculations to double-check, estimates, permit paperwork, exam study	The wiring, the safety calls, passing inspection
Plumber	Quotes, identifying parts from a photo, customer texts, scheduling	The diagnosis under the sink and the repair
Carpenter	Material lists and cut lists from plans, pictures of the finished job for clients	The build, the fit and the finish
Mason	Estimates from plans or photos, scheduling around weather	The craft and the quality of the work
HVAC technician	Equipment manuals, troubleshooting guides, maintenance reminders	The diagnosis, refrigerant handling and licensed work
Welder	Procedure documents, certification study	The weld
Auto and diesel mechanic	Service manuals, diagnostic code research, explaining repairs to customers	The repair and the road test
Foreman, estimator and project manager	Daily logs, change orders, schedules, safety talks, material takeoffs	Leading the crew and keeping the client's trust
Office manager at a trade business	Invoices, scheduling, reviews, marketing	The relationships that bring repeat work

What is going away, plainly

The evenings at the kitchen table are going away for the people who learn the tools. Handwritten estimates, looking up the same manual for the tenth time, retyping notes into invoices and chasing every customer by phone can all be handed off. In larger

companies, some office roles that existed to do that work, such as estimating assistants and dispatchers, will shrink as software takes on more of it. The trade itself is growing. The office around the trade is getting smaller and faster.

If you work in the office of a trade business, this part is about you, and the chapter on business and office work covers your side in full. You start ahead, because you already know how the jobs, the customers and the paperwork fit together. Learn to run the quotes, the schedule and the follow-ups with AI, and you become the person the whole crew relies on: the one who keeps the trucks moving while the tradespeople stay on the tools. The skill chapter on organizing information and data shows the first steps.

The Decision Line in the trades

AI can suggest what the electrical code requires, check a load calculation, walk you through a troubleshooting sequence and draft a safety talk. The licensed professional decides and signs. Codes vary by city and county, and the inspector's reading is the one that counts, so every code answer from AI is a starting point to confirm with the local code and the inspector. Never let an AI tool tell you a circuit, a gas line or a structure is safe. That call belongs to the person standing in front of it.

AI can make those calls more complete without making them for you. Build your checklist from the code book, the manufacturer's instructions and your own experience. Before the job, tell your AI assistant anything specific you want to be sure to look at, such as the bonding on a panel or the venting on a water heater. On the job, put in an earbud and answer the checklist out loud as you go. The AI assistant keeps track, reminds you of anything you skipped or said you wanted to check, and keeps a record of what you covered, so nothing depends on a scrap of paper in your back pocket. The checklist is yours, and so is the sign-off. The AI assistant makes sure nothing on it gets missed.

One connected example: the quote that writes itself

Here is what a day in the trades looks like once the tools are connected.

Luis finishes looking at a leaking water heater. Standing in the driveway, he records a thirty-second voice note on his phone: what he found, what needs replacing, and how long it will take. An AI assistant that already has his price list and his setup turns the note into an itemized quote in his format. An automation sends the draft to his phone, he changes one line and taps approve, and the quote goes to the customer. When the customer accepts, the job lands on his calendar, the parts go on his supplier order list, and the invoice is ready when the job is done.

Field service apps built for the trades, such as Jobber and Housecall Pro, already handle much of this, and an AI assistant plus an automation tool can connect the rest. The skill chapters show how to build each piece: organizing your price list and job log, connecting the tools, and checking the result.

To try the first step today, open your AI assistant and say:

I'm a plumber. Here is my price list for common jobs: [paste]. Here is a voice note transcript from a job I just looked at: [paste]. Turn it into an itemized quote in this format: [describe or paste one of your past quotes]. Use only prices from my list. If something in the note is not on my list, flag it and leave the price blank. Ask me any questions before you write it.

Check every line and every number before it goes to a customer. A quote with a wrong price is a promise you have to keep.

New jobs this world is creating

Data center electrician. AI runs on data centers, and data centers run on electrical work. Fortune reported that journeyman electricians at one union local in northern Virginia earn about \$59.50 an hour, and that apprenticeship applications have risen sharply. *The bridge:* use a study partner tool to prepare for licensing exams and the specialized systems these sites use, and a

research tool to find apprenticeship programs and union locals near you.

Heat pump, EV charger, solar and battery installer. The Bureau of Labor Statistics names renewable energy and grid upgrades as drivers of electrician demand. Plumbers and HVAC technicians are moving into heat pumps for the same reasons. *The bridge:* manufacturers offer certification courses, and an AI study partner can turn a thick installation manual into a quiz you can take in the truck.

Building automation technician. Newer buildings run on control systems that manage heating, cooling, lighting and security. Someone has to install, program and fix them. *The bridge:* an electrician or HVAC technician who uses an AI assistant as a patient tutor can learn the controls side one step at a time.

Construction technology specialist. Contractors now scan job sites with drones and 3D scanners and build digital models of buildings before they pour a foundation. *The bridge:* tradespeople who know how a building goes together, and who use AI to learn the software, are the people contractors want running these tools.

The trade business of one. With an AI office (quotes, scheduling, reviews, marketing and invoices), one skilled tradesperson can run a business that used to need an office manager. Luis's apprentice may never work for anyone else. *The bridge:* the toolbox chapter, the setup chapter and the skill chapters on organizing information and connecting tools.

Where to go next

If you work in the trades, start with the setup chapter so your AI assistant knows your trade, your prices and how you talk to customers. Then read the skill chapters on organizing information and data, planning and coordinating, and building products and services. Each one has a version written for tradespeople.

Behind this chapter

Luis and his apprentice are composites, built from the kinds of small trade businesses described in this chapter. The workforce figures come from Associated Builders and Contractors and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data center figures and pay come from Fortune's reporting, which cites the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The new jobs listed are drawn from the growth drivers those sources name; the building automation and construction technology roles still need their own sources.

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Health and Care

Nurses, home health and personal care aides, nursing and medical assistants, front desk and billing staff, medical coders, imaging and pharmacy technicians, social workers and caseworkers, and everyone who keeps care running

In 2016, one of the best-known researchers in artificial intelligence told a room of experts that the world should stop training radiologists. Computers would soon read X-rays and scans better than doctors, he said, so new radiologists would be training for a job about to vanish.

Nearly a decade later, the opposite has happened. In 2025, American radiology programs offered a record 1,208 training positions, and average pay in the field had risen by almost half since 2015. Mayo Clinic grew its radiology staff by 55% after 2016 while putting hundreds of AI tools to work, and the American College of Radiology expects a shortage of radiologists to last for decades. The researcher, Geoffrey Hinton, later said he had spoken too broadly.

Three things kept radiologists busy. AI that scored well in tests did worse on the messy scans of a working hospital. Medicare and Medicaid pay for a reading only when a doctor signs it. And reading images turned out to be only about a third of a radiologist's day; the rest is talking with other doctors and patients, doing procedures and deciding what a finding means for one person.

A fourth reason may matter most for your own job. Earlier waves of technology made scans faster and cheaper, and people wanted far more of them. The rate of imaging among insured Americans rose 60% from 2000 to 2008, and the extra speed was swallowed by demand. The part of this book on new jobs shows where else this pattern appears, and where it stops.

What is changing

Health care has the best job numbers in this book. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that health care jobs will grow much faster than average from 2025 to 2035, with about 1.9 million openings a year. Home health and personal care aides, already 4.7 million people, are projected to grow 18% as the country gets older. Medical assistants are projected to grow 13%, medical records specialists 8% and medical secretaries 5%.

AI is changing the paperwork within those jobs first. Medical transcriptionists are projected to decline 4%, because speech recognition now lets doctors record a visit as it happens, and the government says AI coding tools may slow hiring of medical records specialists. Many clinics now use AI scribes, which listen to a visit and draft the note. A study in JAMA of more than 1,800 clinicians at five hospitals found the scribes cut documentation time by about 16 minutes a day, a modest gain, and only about a third of users relied on them for most visits.

Social services are seeing the same shift. Fairfax County, Virginia, gave caseworkers an AI tool that turns their notes into structured reports. In the pilot, time spent typing case narratives fell by about half, and caseworkers ask clients for consent first and review every note themselves.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Home health or personal care aide	Visit notes by voice, schedules, reminders, care instructions in another language	The care itself, noticing when something is off, the trust of the person and the family
Nursing or medical assistant	Intake forms, draft charting, preparing for appointments	The patient in front of you, vital signs, speaking up when something looks wrong
Registered nurse	Draft notes, shift handoff summaries, patient education sheets	Assessment, clinical judgment, every medication and care decision

Front desk, scheduler or medical secretary	Booking, reminders, insurance checks, referral letters	The anxious patient, the exceptions, knowing who needs to be seen today
Medical coder or billing specialist	Suggested codes, claim checks, first drafts of appeal letters	Catching the wrong code, the appeal that needs a person, the sign-off
Imaging technologist	Image quality checks, scheduling, protocol reminders	Positioning, patient safety, the scan itself
Pharmacy technician	Refill queues, insurance rejections, inventory	Accuracy checks, and knowing which questions go to the pharmacist
Social worker or caseworker	Case notes by voice, summaries of long records, lists of local resources	Every judgment about a person's safety, and the relationship

What is going away, plainly

Typing what someone else said, copying forms from one system to another and calling the same insurer for the same answer are going away. Transcription is already shrinking. If most of your day is that kind of work, move toward the parts of your job that involve patients, problems and judgment, and learn the tools that are taking the typing, so you become the person who checks them. Clinics need that person, and few have one yet.

The Decision Line in health and care

In health care, the Decision Line is turning into law. Patient decisions and mental health care decisions stay with people. California requires a licensed physician or qualified provider to decide any insurance denial, delay or change of care based on medical necessity, even when AI helps with the review. Illinois bars AI from making therapeutic decisions in mental health care and still allows it for administrative support.

In your own work, AI can draft the note, the summary and the letter. Anything about a diagnosis, a medication, a dose or a person's safety goes to the licensed person responsible, every time. Patient information goes only into tools your employer has

approved, under the privacy rules your workplace follows. A personal account on your phone is the wrong place for it.

One connected example: the referral that does not get lost

A patient needs an MRI. In many clinics that means a referral, a prior authorization request to the insurer, a scheduling call and a reminder, handled by three people and a fax machine. With connected tools, an AI assistant reads the doctor's order, checks it against the insurer's published rules, drafts the request with the right records attached and flags anything missing for a person to fix. When the insurer answers, the AI assistant offers the patient times and sends the reminder. A person reviews each request before it goes out and handles every denial.

Most insurers publish their prior authorization rules online, so you can try the first step with a public document and no patient information. Say to your AI assistant:

Here is [insurer]'s published prior authorization policy for [an MRI of the knee]. Turn it into a one-page checklist for our front desk: what the insurer requires, which documents to attach, and the most common reasons a request gets sent back. Quote the policy for each item so I can check it. Then turn the checklist into a one-page form the front desk can fill in for each request, and add a reminder to my calendar to check the insurer's policy page for changes at the start of each quarter.

Check every item against the policy itself before anyone uses the checklist.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own, grown. Radiologists who use AI well are reading more scans and spending more time on the work only a doctor can do, and the same can happen at the front desk, in the billing office and on a home visit.

The clinic's AI person. Someone has to set up the scribe, the scheduling tool and the reminders, show coworkers how to use them and keep them working well. *The bridge:* the toolbox, setup and checking chapters of this book, and one tool you learn better than anyone else in your clinic.

Healthcare reimbursement specialist. LinkedIn's 2026 list of fastest-growing U.S. jobs put this role sixth. It suits coders, billers and front desk staff who already know how money moves through claims. *The bridge:* use an AI study partner to learn billing codes and payer rules, and look for certificate programs at a community college.

AI trainer with health knowledge. AI companies pay people with subject knowledge to review and improve what their models say, and medical knowledge is in demand. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing. Read any platform's terms and pay rates carefully before you sign up.

Where to go next

If you work in health care, the setup chapter matters most, because a tool that knows your role, your setting and the privacy rules you work under gives safer answers. Then read the skill chapters on organizing information and data, and on testing, checking and reviewing. Front desk and billing staff will find much of their work in the customer service deep dive. If you have already lost work, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

The radiology account draws on Deena Mousa's article in Works in Progress, New York Times reporting summarized by Radiology Business, Fortune's 2026 follow-up and American College of Radiology workforce studies. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2025 to 2035 projections. The scribe figures come from a multisite JAMA study led by Mass General Brigham. The Fairfax County figures come from the county's own release. The laws are California SB 1120 and Illinois HB 1806.

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Public Service and Safety

Police officers, firefighters and EMTs, 911 dispatchers, court and records clerks, benefits eligibility workers, licensing and permit clerks, inspectors, city staff, and everyone who keeps a community safe and its services running

Keisha works the overnight shift at a county 911 center that, like most centers in the country, is short of people. For years her shift ended the same way: an hour of typing the handoff for the morning crew, going back through the call log for every incident still open, every unit still out and every caller owed a callback.

Last year the county put an approved AI assistant on its call records system. Now, half an hour before the shift ends, Keisha asks it to pull the night's call log, draft the handoff summary with every open incident and unit still out, list the callbacks still owed, and add each callback to the morning crew's task list. Within five minutes she had all of it. The AI assistant had also noticed that the same address had called the non-emergency line three times that week about a neighbor dispute, each call logged by a different dispatcher. Keisha passed it to the patrol supervisor before she left.

She read the summary against her own notes, and every incident matched. What to send to which call, and how fast, was never the AI assistant's to decide. Her last hour now goes to the calls still coming in.

What is changing

Public service is short of people in many of its front-line jobs, and that shortage is what is bringing AI in. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects public safety telecommunicators, the 911 dispatchers, to grow 3%, with a median wage of \$53,040 in May 2025. Centers report long overtime and open seats, and some now use AI

on their non-emergency lines. In Charleston County, South Carolina, an automated system handled 36% of non-emergency calls in its first month. Monterey County in California reported AI cutting its non-emergency call volume by about 36% on average. In each case, real emergencies go straight to a person.

Police paperwork is changing even faster. Axon, the company that makes most police body cameras, launched Draft One in 2024, a tool that writes the first draft of a police report from body camera audio. Departments in many states now use it, and lawmakers have moved quickly to set rules around it, which this chapter covers below.

The jobs most exposed are the clerical ones. The government projects office and administrative support jobs as a whole to decline from 2025 to 2035, and public agencies employ many of those workers: records and court clerks, licensing and permit clerks, and the people who process benefit applications. Much of what they do is reading forms, checking them against rules and answering the same questions, which is work AI now does well.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Police officer	First drafts of reports, transcripts, records searches, translation	What happened, what you saw, every decision on the street, the report you sign
Firefighter or EMT	Incident reports, equipment and supply checks, training scheduling	The scene, the patient, the call to go in or hold back
911 dispatcher	Non-emergency calls, translation, handoff summaries, call logs	Every emergency call, who goes where, staying with the caller
Court or records clerk	Finding and sorting records, first-pass redaction, filing deadlines	What can be released, the exceptions, the person at the counter
Benefits eligibility worker	Reading applications, checking documents, flagging what is missing	The eligibility decision, the hard case, the family in front of you

Licensing or permit clerk	Answering routine questions, checking forms, scheduling	The exception, the appeal, the judgment call
Building or code inspector	Reading plans, checklists, report drafts, scheduling	What you see on site and the pass or fail
City or county staff	Meeting minutes, public notices, summaries for council, answering resident emails	The recommendation, the public meeting, accountability to residents

What is going away, plainly

Typing reports from scratch, answering routine questions at a counter or on the phone, checking forms line by line and searching records by hand are shrinking. If those tasks fill most of your day, start now on the parts of your job that rest on judgment and trust: the exceptions, the appeals, the person who is confused or upset, and the decisions someone has to make and sign.

If you are a clerk in a public office, this chapter is written most of all for you. You already know the rules better than any tool, and public agencies will need people who can run the new tools inside those rules. Learn them first, and you become the person your office relies on to make the change work. The skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing shows you how.

The Decision Line in public service and safety

The rules here are already being written, and they all put a person's name on the work. Utah passed a law in 2025 requiring police reports drafted with AI to say so and requiring the officer to certify that the report was checked for accuracy. California went further with a law that took effect January 1, 2026: every page of a report drafted with AI must say so, and departments must keep a record of the AI draft. The prosecutor's office in King County, Washington, told police in 2024 that it would not accept reports drafted with AI at all.

In your own work, AI can draft the report, sort the calls, find the records and check the forms. Who gets sent to an emergency, who is stopped or arrested, who receives benefits, what a public record

may reveal and what goes into a sworn report stays with the person responsible. Personal information about residents goes only into tools your agency has approved.

AI can make those calls more complete. At the start of a shift, an EMT can walk through the ambulance equipment check by voice, saying each item while the AI assistant logs it and reminds them of anything skipped. The EMT still decides the rig is ready to roll.

One connected example: the records office that keeps up

A small city clerk's office receives hundreds of public records requests a year, each with a legal deadline. Now each request arrives through a form that feeds a tracking sheet. An AI assistant logs the request, searches the city's approved records system for matching documents, marks the passages that may need to be withheld under the state's records law, drafts the response letter and puts the legal deadline on the clerk's calendar with a reminder a week before. The clerk reviews every document and every proposed redaction, decides what is released and signs the response.

You can practice with material that is already yours: a letter you have received from a government agency, with your personal numbers removed. Say to your AI assistant:

Here is a letter I received from [the agency], with my personal numbers removed. Explain in plain words what it is asking me to do. List every document I need and every deadline in it. Draft a short reply I can send. Then put each deadline on my calendar, with a reminder two weeks before.

Check every deadline against the letter itself, and call the agency if anything is unclear. Seeing how AI reads a government letter is also good practice for anyone who answers residents' questions for a living.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own, grown. Keisha's center now asks her to help train newer dispatchers on the AI assistant, because she uses it well. Beyond that, two directions suit people from this field.

911 dispatcher. Centers across the country are short of people, and the government projects 3% growth with a median wage of \$53,040. AI is taking the routine calls, which leaves the work that matters most. It suits customer service workers, clerks and anyone calm under pressure. *The bridge:* the customer service deep dive and your state's dispatcher training program.

Public sector AI and records specialist. New laws in Utah and California require police departments to keep AI policies, disclosures and records of AI drafts, and other states are likely to follow for more kinds of public work. Someone has to set up those records, check them and answer them. This is a new direction with no job count yet, and clerks who know the records law are well placed for it. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing.

Where to go next

If you work in public safety, start with the chapter on asking well and staying safe, since your reports and records carry legal weight. Clerks and benefits staff should read the skill chapters on organizing information and data, and on testing, checking and reviewing, and the customer service deep dive. The part of the book on the motels nobody saw coming imagines where public offices like the DMV may go next. If you have already lost work, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Keisha is a composite, built from how county 911 centers run shift handoffs and from reporting on staffing shortages, including centers where dispatchers work twelve- to sixteen-hour days. The

five minutes and the repeat address are illustrative. The non-emergency figures come from Charleston County, South Carolina, as reported by NewsNation, and from Monterey County, California, as reported by Spotlight on America. The police report rules come from Utah's SB 180, California's SB 524 and reporting on King County's prosecutors. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook.

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Law, Finance and Insurance

Paralegals and legal assistants, bank tellers and branch staff, loan officers and processors, claims adjusters and underwriters, bookkeepers and accountants, tax preparers, compliance staff, and everyone who keeps money and contracts moving

Tanya is a paralegal at a six-lawyer personal injury firm. When a new case comes in, the client's medical records can run to several hundred pages from a dozen providers, and building a timeline of every visit, diagnosis and bill used to take her two full days.

Last month a box of 640 pages arrived on a Monday. Tanya loaded them into the legal AI tool the firm had approved and typed one request: build a chronology of every visit with the date, the provider, what was found and what was billed, mark each entry with its page number, list any gap in treatment longer than thirty days, and draft a one-page summary for the attorney. Within the hour she had all of it. The tool had also flagged a seven-week gap between physical therapy visits, the first thing the insurance company's lawyer would ask about.

Tanya spent the afternoon confirming entries against their pages and calling the client about the gap, which turned out to be a family emergency with its own paperwork. The attorney decided how to present it. Two days of typing became an afternoon of the work only Tanya could do.

What is changing

Law, finance and insurance run on documents, rules and numbers, which today's AI tools read faster than any person. The jobs numbers show the routine part of the work shrinking while the judgment part holds. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that bank tellers, about 339,000 people, will decline 13% from 2025

to 2035 as branches close and customers move to mobile banking. Claims adjusters and examiners are projected to decline 6%, partly because software can now estimate damage from photos, and insurance underwriters 4%, as automated underwriting spreads. Paralegals and legal assistants, about 405,000 people, are projected to hold steady, and the government names AI as the reason demand will not grow.

The judgment jobs look steadier. Loan officers are projected to grow 1%, and accountants and auditors, 1.6 million people, 5%. The government expects AI to take over data entry in accounting and leave accountants more time for analysis and advice. In a 2024 Thomson Reuters survey of legal, tax and accounting professionals, respondents expected AI to save them about four hours a week within a year and twelve hours a week within five years. What each person does with those hours decides where their job goes.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Paralegal or legal assistant	Record chronologies, first drafts of letters and motions, research summaries	Confirming every citation and page, the client relationship, what the attorney needs to know
Bank teller or branch associate	Account questions, routine transactions, product comparisons	Spotting a customer who may be the victim of a scam, the relationship, the exceptions
Loan officer or processor	Gathering documents, checking applications for gaps, drafting conditions lists	The conversation with the borrower, the unusual file, the decision
Claims adjuster or examiner	Estimates from photos, policy summaries, file notes, customer updates	Inspecting what photos cannot show, spotting fraud, the decision to pay or deny
Underwriter	Gathering data, scoring routine applications, flagging exceptions	The hard cases and the final call
Bookkeeper or accountant	Categorizing transactions, reconciliations, first-pass reports	Explaining the numbers, advising the owner, the sign-off

Tax preparer	Sorting documents, organizing deductions, drafting questions for the client	The return you sign and what the law allows
Compliance analyst	Reading new rules, summarizing alerts, drafting reports	The judgment on what is suspicious, the escalation, the filing

What is going away, plainly

Retyping data from one form into another, matching documents by hand, summarizing a stack of pages and answering routine account questions are shrinking fast. If that is most of your day, start now on the parts of your job that rest on judgment and trust: the exceptions, the hard conversations and the decisions someone has to sign. Then learn the tools that do the reading, so the faster work flows through you.

The Decision Line in law, finance and insurance

Every job in this field already has rules about who decides, and those rules now cover AI. The American Bar Association's Formal Opinion 512, issued in July 2024, says lawyers must review what AI produces, cannot hand it decisions that need professional judgment, generally need a client's informed consent before putting confidential information into some AI tools, and must train and supervise the staff who use it, including paralegals. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has told lenders that a denial made with AI still needs a notice giving the specific reasons. For insurers, a model bulletin from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, adopted by about half the states, expects a written program for any AI that affects decisions about customers.

In your own work, AI can read the file, match the documents, summarize the policy and draft the letter. Paying or denying a claim, approving or declining a loan, filing a document and advising a client to stay with the licensed person responsible. Client and customer information goes only into tools your employer has approved.

One connected example: the claim file that builds itself

A homeowner reports water damage from a burst pipe. In many offices that starts a week of calls and paperwork. With connected tools, an AI assistant reads the policy, summarizes what it covers for water damage and what it excludes, estimates the repair from the homeowner's photos, lists the documents still missing and drafts a clear update to the homeowner with the next steps. It also puts the follow-up dates on the adjuster's calendar. The adjuster reviews each piece, inspects what photos cannot show and makes the decision.

You can practice the first step today with a document that is yours to share: your own home, renters or auto insurance policy, with the policy number removed. Say to your AI assistant:

Here is my [homeowners] insurance policy, with the policy number removed. Explain in plain words what it covers for water damage and what it excludes, with the page number for each point. Then make a checklist of what I would need to file a water damage claim, and add a reminder to my calendar a month before the policy renews so I can review the coverage.

Confirm each point against the page it cites, and call your insurer about anything that matters to an actual claim.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own, grown. Tanya stayed in her job, and the firm now sends her the cases with the biggest records because she turns them around fastest. Beyond that, LinkedIn's 2026 list of the fastest-growing U.S. jobs includes three roles that suit people from this field.

Legal researcher. Twenty-third on the list. It suits paralegals and legal assistants who already enjoy the research side of the work. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on investigating and researching, and practice with the research tools your firm already pays for.

Financial advisor and planner. Twenty-first on the list, and a natural step for bank staff who already talk with customers about

money. *The bridge*: an AI study partner for the licensing exams these roles require.

Background investigator. Fifteenth on the list. It suits tellers, compliance staff and claims examiners who are good at confirming who someone is and whether the story holds together. *The bridge*: the skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing.

Where to go next

If you work in law, finance or insurance, the setup chapter matters most for you, because a tool that knows your role and the rules you work under gives answers you can use. Then read the skill chapters on organizing information and data, and on testing, checking and reviewing. Bank and insurance staff who talk with customers all day will find much of their work in the customer service deep dive. If you have already lost work, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Tanya is a composite, built from the kinds of small firms and record reviews described in reporting on legal AI. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2025 to 2035 projections. The time-saving estimates come from the Thomson Reuters Institute's 2024 Future of Professionals report. The rules come from ABA Formal Opinion 512, CFPB Circular 2022-03 and the NAIC model bulletin on insurers' use of AI. The fastest-growing jobs come from LinkedIn's 2026 Jobs on the Rise list, as reported by Allwork.Space.

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Arts, Media and Entertainment

Graphic designers, writers and copywriters, editors, reporters, photographers, video editors and camera operators, musicians and composers, actors and voice actors, animators, fashion designers, and everyone who makes the pictures, words, sounds and stories the rest of us enjoy

In the 1920s, nearly every movie theater in America had live musicians. A small town might have a piano player; a big city palace had a full orchestra in the pit, playing along with every silent film. Then sound came to the movies at the end of the decade, and within a few years the pit went quiet. Jeffrey Katzenberg, the former Disney studio chief and DreamWorks cofounder, has written that tens of thousands of theater musicians lost their work as sound spread. Those jobs did not come back.

Sound also created work nobody had imagined: film scores, the movie musical, sound effects and sound design, and whole careers in recording and mixing. Some of those pit musicians found their way into the new crafts. Many never did.

Katzenberg lived through a smaller version of the same shift. When DreamWorks moved from hand-drawn to computer animation in the early 2000s, some of its best artists faced a new set of tools. Writing in 2026, he put it this way: "Some made the leap to the new tools and did the finest work of their careers. Some never did." Katzenberg now invests in AI companies, so he has a stake in this story. His point still holds for anyone who makes things for a living. The tools change, and the people who learn them early do much of the best work that follows.

What is changing

AI can now write, draw, edit photos, cut video, compose music and clone a voice from a short sample. Creative work is changing faster than most fields, and the numbers show the routine side of it shrinking. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics counted about 213,000 graphic designers on payrolls in May 2023 and about 198,000 in May 2025, and it projects a further 2% decline from 2025 to 2035. Desktop publishers, who lay out pages, are projected to decline 12%. Writers and authors, about 140,000 people, are projected to hold flat, and the government expects AI to hold down demand. Payroll jobs for reporters and journalists have fallen from about 65,000 in 1999 to about 39,000 in 2025, and the government projects more decline as advertising money shrinks.

The other side of the ledger is real too. Web and digital interface designers grew over the same two years graphic designers shrank. Companies need more content than ever, for more channels, and a person who can direct AI tools can make more of it, faster, for clients who could never afford a full agency before.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Graphic designer	First drafts, variations, resizing for every channel, background removal	The idea, taste, the brand, the client relationship
Writer or copywriter	First drafts, research summaries, headline options, edits for length	Voice, the story, what is true, what the reader needs
Editor	Proofreading, fact flags, style checks, summaries	Judgment on what runs, the writer's trust
Reporter	Transcripts, document searches, data analysis, first drafts of routine stories	Sources, interviews, verification, the decision to publish
Photographer	Culling, retouching, editing, client galleries and emails	The moment, the light, the people in front of the lens
Video editor or camera operator	Rough cuts, captions, color matching, clips for social media	The story, pacing, the shot itself

Musician or composer	Demos, arrangements, practice tracks, booking and promotion	Performance, the song, the room
Actor or voice actor	Routine voice reads, translations of a performance, auditions recorded at home	Performance, and consent over your face and voice

What is going away, plainly

Laying out pages, resizing the same ad twenty ways, writing routine product descriptions, stock photos, basic retouching, transcription and simple voice reads are shrinking fast. If those make up most of your paid work, the next step is to move closer to the idea and the client: the concept, the direction, the story and the final call on what is good.

If you are a production artist, a layout person or a writer of routine content, this chapter is written most of all for you. You already know how the work gets made. Learn to direct the tools that now make the first draft, and you become the person who can deliver in a day what used to take a week. The skill chapter on designing and creating shows you how.

The Decision Line in arts and media

Two rules shape this field. The first is consent. The 2023 contract between the Hollywood studios and the actors' union, SAG-AFTRA, requires consent and payment before a studio can make a digital copy of a performer, and several states have passed laws protecting a person's voice and likeness. The second is authorship. The U.S. Copyright Office has said that work made entirely by AI cannot be copyrighted, and that a person's own creative choices are what the law protects.

In your own work, AI can draft, vary, edit and organize. What the piece says, whose face or voice appears in it, whether a fact is true and whether the work is good enough to carry your name stay with you. Put your own creative choices into everything you deliver, and keep a record of them.

AI can make those calls more complete. A wedding photographer can keep the couple's shot list in an earbud, telling the AI assistant each shot as it is taken and hearing what is still missing before the light goes. The photographer still decides what makes the album.

One connected example: the photographer's business that runs itself

A freelance portrait photographer used to spend more time on email than behind the camera. Now a booking form on her website feeds a spreadsheet. An AI assistant drafts each client's contract from her own template, puts the shoot on her calendar, and sends a short questionnaire about the shot list and wardrobe. After the shoot, an AI culling tool sorts thousands of frames into the sharp, the blinking and the duplicates, and the AI assistant drafts the gallery email. She picks every final image herself and spends the time she saved on more shoots.

You can practice with material that is already yours: your own past work and what you charged for it. Say to your AI assistant:

Here are descriptions of ten pieces of my past work, with what I charged and roughly how long each took. Write a short, plain description of what I do for a one-page portfolio. Suggest three packages with prices based on my real hours and rates. Draft a short email offering those packages to small local businesses. Then put a reminder on my calendar to follow up with each one a week after I send it.

Read every word as if a client were reading it, and set the prices yourself. The packages are a starting point drawn from your own numbers.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own, grown. A designer who can direct AI tools can take on motion, video and web work that once went to someone else. Beyond that, two directions suit people from this field.

Digital and interface designer. Web and digital interface designers grew from about 111,000 to about 113,000 on payrolls between May 2023 and May 2025, while print-focused design shrank. It suits graphic designers and production artists. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on designing and creating, and practice with the design and prototyping tools covered in the toolbox chapter.

Independent creator for small businesses. Many small businesses now want video, photos and posts every week and cannot afford an agency. A person who can shoot, write and direct AI tools can serve several of them at once. This path has no single job count, so treat it as a direction to test while you earn. *The bridge:* the part of the book on earning while you learn, in At the Wall, and the short skill chapter on communicating and persuading.

Where to go next

If you make things for a living, read the skill chapter on designing and creating first, then the toolbox chapter's sections on image, video and audio tools. Writers and reporters should read the skill chapter on investigating and researching. If your work has dried up, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

The opener draws on Jeffrey Katzenberg's essay "The World is Changing: AI For Creativity," posted on X on September 23, 2026, and on coverage of it. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook and its payroll survey. The consent and copyright points come from the 2023 SAG-AFTRA agreement and the U.S. Copyright Office's 2025 report on AI and copyrightability.

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Food, Hospitality and Travel

Servers and bartenders, counter and fast food workers, cooks and chefs, kitchen and restaurant managers, hotel front desk and housekeeping staff, event and banquet staff, travel agents, and everyone who feeds, hosts and looks after people away from home

Tony runs the kitchen at an eighty-seat family restaurant in San Antonio. Sunday nights used to belong to the clipboard: counting the walk-in, guessing next week's covers, writing the order for the produce and meat suppliers, and building the cooks' schedule around whatever he guessed.

Now he does it with one request to the AI assistant the owner set up, connected to the register and the restaurant's email: read the last four weeks of sales and this month's supplier invoices, forecast covers for each day next week, draft the produce and protein order, flag any item whose price rose more than ten percent and which dishes it affects, draft a cook schedule that matches the forecast, and put Thursday's order deadline on his calendar. Within fifteen minutes he had all of it. The AI assistant also noticed from the register data that brisket had sold out before eight on each of the last two Saturdays, and raised the Saturday order to match.

Tony checked the order against what he could see in the walk-in, called his produce rep about the avocados, which were up 22% and sat in three dishes, and talked with two cooks about trading shifts. Whether to raise a price or change a garnish was his call. Sunday night is now an hour, and he spends the time he saved on the line with his cooks.

What is changing

This field is still hiring, and AI is arriving more slowly here than in an office. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics counts about 5 million food and beverage serving workers and projects them to grow 5%. Waiters and waitresses, about 2.2 million people, are projected to hold close to flat, at minus 1%. Food service managers, about 344,000 people, are projected to grow 6% from 2025 to 2035.

The change shows up in the tasks before it shows up in the jobs numbers. In the National Restaurant Association's 2026 report, 26% of operators said they use AI tools, 10% use them for administrative work, and only 6% use AI to take customer orders. Ordering is moving to phones, kiosks and tablets at the table, and the big chains are testing voice AI at the drive-thru, with mixed results so far. Taco Bell rethought its rollout after the voice ordering proved inconsistent. Hotels and travel sites are adding AI that answers guest questions and books trips.

That slower pace is good news for you. In this field, time is an asset. The people who learn the tools while the change is still gradual will be the ones who run the new way of working when it arrives.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Server or bartender	Orders on tablets and phones, menu questions, payment at the table	Reading the table, the recommendation, turning a bad night around
Counter or fast food worker	Kiosk and app ordering, voice ordering at the drive-thru	Fixing the wrong order, the regulars, keeping the line moving
Cook	Prep lists, recipe scaling, temperature logs	Taste, timing, the plate that goes out
Chef or kitchen manager	Forecasts, orders, food costs, schedules, menu descriptions	The menu, the prices, the team, food safety
Hotel front desk	Check-in by phone, routine guest questions, booking changes	The guest with a problem, the upgrade, the judgment call

Housekeeping	Room assignments and status updates on a phone	The care in the room and noticing what is wrong
Event or banquet staff	Seating charts, run sheets, vendor emails, timelines	The day itself and handling what goes wrong
Travel agent	Searching flights and hotels, building itineraries, price tracking	Knowing the client, the complex trip, fixing a trip that breaks

What is going away, plainly

Taking routine orders at a counter, answering the same guest questions at the front desk, writing orders and schedules by hand, and booking simple trips are the tasks shrinking first. If those fill most of your shift, start building the parts of the job that rest on people and judgment: the guest who is upset, the order that went wrong, the menu, the cost of a plate and the team on a busy night.

If you work a counter or a front desk, this chapter is written most of all for you. The same tools that take orders can help you learn the business side of the place you work: what each dish costs, how the schedule gets built, why some nights run short. Learn that, and you become the person the manager trusts with more. The skill chapter on organizing information and data shows you how.

The Decision Line in food, hospitality and travel

Food safety is where the line is clearest. Many states and cities require a certified food safety manager on site, and the kitchen answers for what it serves. AI can list the allergens in every recipe, keep the temperature log and draft the cleaning schedule. Telling a guest with a severe allergy that a dish is safe stays with the person who has checked the actual labels and the actual kitchen. The same goes for refunds, comps, a guest who is unwell, and the call to close a section when the kitchen is short.

AI can make those calls more complete. At closing, a cook with gloves on can walk through the closing checklist by voice, saying each temperature and task while the AI assistant logs it and

reminds them of anything skipped. The cook still decides that the kitchen is ready for the morning.

One connected example: the small inn that answers itself

A six-room inn used to lose its owner's evenings to email. Now its booking form feeds a spreadsheet. An AI assistant reads each guest message and drafts a reply from the inn's own house guide, notes special requests such as an early check-in or a food allergy on the booking, sends each guest a welcome text with directions and the door code the day before arrival, and drafts a reply to every review after checkout. The owner approves every message before it goes and handles anything unusual herself.

You can practice with material that is already yours: a recipe you cook at home and a recent grocery receipt. Say to your AI assistant:

Here is my recipe for [dish], which serves four, and my grocery receipt from this week. Scale the recipe to forty portions. Work out the cost per portion from the prices on my receipt. List every common allergen in it. Build a prep timeline that works backward from a 6 p.m. service. Then put reminders on my calendar for each prep step the day I make it.

Check every allergen against the product labels, and check the prices against your receipt. Costing a plate is a skill kitchen managers use every week, and this is a way to practice it today.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own, grown. Tony's owner now asks him to help set the menu prices, because he can show what each dish costs and how often it sells. Beyond that, two directions suit people from this field.

Food service manager. The government projects 6% growth from 2025 to 2035 and reports a median wage of \$69,390 in May 2025. It notes that many managers start as cooks or in other restaurant jobs. It suits cooks, shift leads and servers who already understand

how a busy night runs. *The bridge*: the skill chapter on organizing information and data, and an AI study partner for a food safety manager certification.

Event planner. Meeting, convention and event planners are projected to grow 5%. It suits banquet staff, servers and hotel staff who already know how events work from the floor. *The bridge*: the short skill chapter on planning and coordinating.

Where to go next

If you work on your feet all shift, start with the chapter on putting AI in your pocket, so your phone and your voice do the work between rushes. Managers and anyone who wants the business side of the job should read the skill chapters on organizing information and data, and on communicating and persuading, which covers guest messages and reviews. Front desk and reservations staff will find much of their work in the customer service deep dive. If you have already lost work, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Tony is a composite, built from how independent restaurants plan the week. Food and labor are a restaurant's two largest costs, and weekly ordering and scheduling are still done by hand in many kitchens, which matches the National Restaurant Association's finding that only 10% of operators use AI for administrative work. The eighty seats, the brisket and the avocado figure are illustrative. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook and its 2024 Economics Daily item on food service jobs. The adoption figures come from the National Restaurant Association's State of the Restaurant Industry 2026 report, as reported by Restaurant Dive.

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Transportation and Logistics

Truck and delivery drivers, taxi and rideshare drivers, dispatchers, warehouse associates, shipping, receiving and inventory clerks, freight brokers, postal workers, logistics planners, and everyone who moves people and goods

Annette dispatches for a regional carrier that runs forty trucks out of a yard in Ohio. Monday mornings used to start at five with coffee, a whiteboard and the phone: which drivers had hours left, which loads might miss their delivery windows, and which customers needed a call before they called her.

Last spring her company connected its approved AI assistant to the dispatch system and the shared mailbox. Now Annette starts the week with one request: check every driver's remaining hours against this week's loads, list any load at risk of missing its delivery window and why, draft a short update for each affected customer, and list every driver whose medical card or license renewal comes up within sixty days, with a reminder on her calendar for each one. Within ten minutes she had all of it. The AI assistant had also flagged a load that looked on time on paper, because the receiver's dock closes at two on Mondays, a detail buried in an email thread from March.

Annette checked the flagged loads against her board, called one driver to swap a load, and read each customer update before sending it. Who drives what, and whether a tired driver should roll, stayed with her. The Monday scramble now takes twenty minutes, and the rest of the morning goes to her drivers.

What is changing

Transportation looks like the first field AI should take over, since self-driving vehicles get the headlines. The numbers tell a more

careful story. Driverless trucks are real: Aurora began hauling customer freight between Dallas and Houston with no one in the cab in spring 2025, passed 250,000 driverless miles by January 2026, and aims to have more than 200 driverless trucks on the road by the end of 2026. Robotaxis now carry paying riders in several U.S. cities.

Even so, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver jobs to grow, from about 2.22 million in 2025 to about 2.31 million in 2035, with more than 200,000 openings a year as drivers retire. Taxi, shuttle and chauffeur jobs are projected to grow 9%, partly because older riders need trips to medical appointments. Warehouse jobs for hand laborers and material movers, about 7 million people, are projected to grow 4% as online shopping grows, with automation slowing that growth.

The losses are in the work around the wheel. Material recording clerks, the shipping, receiving and inventory clerks who track what comes in and goes out, are about 1.3 million people and are projected to decline 6% from 2025 to 2035. Postal service workers are projected to decline 5%, with mail sorters falling faster as machines read and sort the mail. Meanwhile logisticians, the people who plan how goods move, are projected to grow 18% from 2025 to 2035. The wheel will be the last part to change. The office around it is changing now.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Truck driver	Route planning, logs, paperwork at pickup and delivery, voice updates to dispatch	Driving judgment, the pre-trip inspection, the call on weather and fatigue
Delivery or rideshare driver	Routes, earnings tracking, mileage logs, customer messages	Safe driving, the handoff at the door, which hours you choose to work
Dispatcher	Matching loads to drivers, checking hours, tracking loads, drafting customer updates	Who drives what, the exceptions, the relationship with drivers and customers

Warehouse associate	Pick paths, robot-assisted picking, inventory counts, safety checklists	Handling the odd item, spotting damage, working safely around machines
Shipping, receiving or inventory clerk	Reading bills of lading and invoices, matching them to orders, updating records	Resolving the shortage or the damaged pallet, the call to the supplier
Freight broker or agent	Finding carriers, comparing rates, tracking shipments, drafting quotes	Negotiating, vetting carriers, the customer relationship
Postal worker	Sorting, route planning, package scanning	The route, the signature, knowing the neighborhood
Logistics planner	Forecasts, scenario plans, cost comparisons, reports	The plan you commit to and the tradeoffs behind it

What is going away, plainly

Typing delivery receipts and bills of lading into a system, answering "where is my shipment" calls, counting stock by hand, matching invoices to deliveries and building routes on a whiteboard are shrinking fast. If those tasks fill most of your day, start now on the parts of the job that rest on judgment: the exceptions, the problem shipments and the conversations with drivers, suppliers and customers.

If you work in the office of a trucking company, a warehouse or a post office, this chapter is written most of all for you. The tools taking over the typing are the same tools that let one person see the whole operation at once. Learn them first, and become the person everyone calls because you know where every load stands and why. The skill chapter on organizing information and data shows you how.

The Decision Line in transportation

Safety rules already put people in charge here. Federal rules hold the motor carrier responsible for drivers' hours, qualifications and vehicle condition, and an AI tool that drafts the schedule does not change who answers for it. AI can plan the routes, check the hours, read the emails, track the loads and draft the messages. Whether a

driver is fit to drive, whether a truck rolls into an ice storm, whether to take a hazardous load and what to tell a customer when something goes wrong, stays with people.

AI can make those calls more complete. A driver parked at the start of a shift can use voice to walk through the pre-trip inspection with an AI assistant as a checklist partner, saying what they see at each step while the AI assistant logs it and reminds them of anything skipped. The decision that the truck is safe stays with the driver. Phones stay down while the truck is moving.

One connected example: the small mover that runs itself

A two-truck moving company used to lose evenings to paperwork. Now a quote form on its website feeds a spreadsheet. An AI assistant reads each new request, estimates the hours and crew from the inventory the customer listed, drafts a quote for the owner to approve, and once the customer accepts, puts the job on the calendar and texts the customer a reminder and an arrival window the day before. After the move, the crew's photos and the signed form are filed with the job. The owner approves every quote and handles every complaint, and gets her evenings back.

You can practice with material that is already yours. Most taxi and rideshare drivers work for themselves, and the driver apps let you download your trip and earnings history. Download last month's history and say to your AI assistant:

Here is my trip and earnings history for last month from [the app]. Build a table of what I earned per hour by day of the week and time of day, after subtracting fuel at [your cost per mile]. Tell me my three best and three worst blocks of hours. Total my business miles for the month. Then put a reminder on my calendar two weeks before each quarterly estimated tax date this year.

Check the miles against your own mileage log, and take tax questions to a tax preparer. Which hours you drive is your call. The table just makes it an informed one.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own, grown. Annette's company now has her watch the board for its second terminal as well, because the Monday check that used to take her all morning takes minutes. She is also the person the company would lean on if the system went down, since she still knows how to run a Monday with a whiteboard and a phone. Twice a year, the company now tests its business continuity plan with the AI assistant switched off, and Annette leads the test. Beyond that, three directions suit people from this field.

Logistician. The government projects 18% growth from 2025 to 2035, with a median wage of \$82,320 in May 2025. It suits dispatchers, clerks and warehouse leads who already know how goods move. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on organizing information and data, and an AI study partner for a supply chain certificate.

Dispatcher for mixed fleets. Dispatch software is starting to manage driverless trucks alongside human drivers. McLeod, a widely used trucking management system, added Aurora's driverless trucks to its system in January 2026. Someone has to plan those loads, watch them and step in when something changes, and experienced dispatchers know the lanes and the customers. *The bridge:* the short skill chapter on planning and coordinating.

Autonomous fleet support. Driverless trucks and robotaxis rely on people who give remote help when a vehicle meets something it cannot handle, and on field crews who inspect and recover vehicles. These jobs are new and still few, and drivers who know the roads and the rules bring what the work needs. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing.

Where to go next

If you drive for a living, start with the chapter on putting AI in your pocket, so voice and your phone do the work while you are parked. Office staff in trucking, warehouses and shipping should read the skill chapters on organizing information and data, and on testing,

checking and reviewing. Drivers who work for themselves will find the earning-while-learning ideas in *At the Wall* useful even if they have not lost work. If you have, that part of the book is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Annette is a composite, built from how small and regional carriers run dispatch. Trucking is mostly small fleets, the federal hours-of-service rules cap how long a driver can drive in a shift, and drivers must renew their medical certificates on a schedule, so a weekly check of hours, delivery windows and renewals is the kind of work a dispatcher does by hand. The forty trucks, the Monday dock rule and the ten minutes are illustrative. The driverless figures come from Aurora's own announcements as reported by trade press, and from BGR's September 2026 report. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook and its 2026 Economics Daily item on truck drivers.

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Education and Libraries

Teachers and teacher assistants, school office staff, librarians and library assistants, tutors, trainers, adult education and ESL teachers, school counselors' support staff, and everyone who helps people learn.

Lorna teaches fourth grade in a public school outside Columbus, Ohio, with twenty-six students and one shared aide. Sunday afternoons used to disappear into a stack of quizzes: grading, working out who had missed which skill, and building practice sheets at three levels so nobody spent Monday bored or lost.

Her district now provides an approved AI assistant connected to the class gradebook and her lesson folder. On Sunday she asks it to read this week's math quiz scores, group her students by the skill each one missed, draft Monday's practice sheet at three levels, write a short note to the families of the students who need extra help in each family's home language, and put a reminder on her calendar to reteach the hardest skill on Thursday. Within twenty minutes she had all of it. The AI assistant also noticed that one student's scores had dropped across three weeks in every subject, a pattern that did not show up in any single gradebook column.

Lorna read every practice sheet and sent the family notes herself. She called the student's mother on Monday and looped in the school counselor. Deciding what a child needs, and talking with the family, stayed with her. Sunday afternoon is now an hour, and she spends the rest of it with her own kids.

What is changing

Teachers are already using AI, mostly to win back time. In a 2025 Gallup and Walton Family Foundation survey of more than 2,200 public school teachers, 60% had used an AI tool during the school

year, and those who used it every week saved an average of 5.9 hours a week, about six weeks over a school year. Only 19% worked at a school with an AI policy, and teachers at those schools saved more time than teachers at schools without one.

The jobs picture here is shaped more by enrollment than by AI. Public school enrollment is projected to decline, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects small declines for teachers and teacher assistants, who are often the first jobs cut when budgets tighten. In libraries, the change is sharper: library technicians and assistants are projected to decline 7% as checkouts, catalogs and routine questions move online.

Meanwhile, every workplace now needs people who can teach adults to use new tools. Training and development specialists, who design and run training at companies and agencies, are projected to grow about 11%, roughly double the average for all jobs.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Teacher	Practice sheets at several levels, quiz drafts, feedback drafts, family notes, translation	Knowing each child, the lesson in the room, grades, every call to a family
Teacher assistant	Reading support materials, progress logs, translated notes	The small group, the student who needs a person beside them
School office staff	Attendance calls, enrollment forms, schedules, family questions	The worried parent, the exception, student privacy
Librarian	Catalog records, reading lists, program flyers, grant drafts	Helping a person find what they really need, judging sources, the community
Library assistant	Checkouts, holds, routine questions, shelving lists	The patron who needs help with a form or a computer
Tutor	Practice problems, progress tracking, session plans	Spotting where a student is stuck and keeping them going
Adult education or ESL teacher	Lessons at many levels, conversation practice, translation	Trust with adult learners, the lesson that fits their real lives

What is going away, plainly

Checking out books by hand, answering the same questions at a desk, typing schedules and forms, and building every worksheet from scratch are shrinking. If those tasks fill most of your day, start now on the parts of your work that rest on people and judgment: the student or patron who needs a human, the family conversation, the program you design and the lesson only you can teach.

If you are a library assistant, a teacher assistant or school office staff, this chapter is written most of all for you. Your schools and libraries are about to spend money on AI tools and need people who can help teachers, patrons and families use them well. Learn them first, and you become that person. The short skill chapter on learning and teaching shows you how.

The Decision Line in education and libraries

Student privacy sets the line. The federal student privacy law known as FERPA protects education records, so student names, grades and records go only into tools your school or district has approved. Libraries have long protected what patrons borrow and read, and that duty stays with the library whatever tools it uses.

Within those rules, AI can draft the lesson, sort the scores, translate the note and build the reading list. Grades, discipline, what a child needs, what goes in a student's record and every conversation with a family stays with the educator. Use the hours you get back for the students.

AI can make those calls more complete. A teacher on a field trip can keep the headcount and the permission list in an earbud, saying each check-in out loud while the AI assistant tracks who is accounted for and who is still missing. The teacher still decides when the group moves on.

One connected example: the library program that runs itself

A small public library runs free computer classes for older adults, and the sign-ups used to live on a clipboard. Now a sign-up form on the library's website feeds a spreadsheet. An AI assistant sends each person a confirmation and a reminder the day before, keeps a waitlist and offers open seats in order, drafts the flyer in English and Spanish, and after each class drafts a short summary for the library board with attendance and the questions people asked most. The library assistant who runs the program approves every message and spends the class itself helping people at their keyboards.

You can practice with material that is already yours. If you have children in school, take the school calendar and one class newsletter or syllabus. If you do not, use your own work or community calendar and any schedule you follow. Say to your AI assistant:

Here is my child's school calendar for this year and the class newsletter for this month. List every test, project deadline, early dismissal and day off. Put each one on my calendar with a reminder three days before. Then draft a simple weekly study plan for the next month that works around those dates.

Check every date against the school's own calendar, and leave your child's name and grades out of the request. The plan is a starting point to work out together with your child.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own, grown. Lorna's principal now asks her to show other teachers how she plans with the AI assistant, because her Sunday hour has become the school's model. Beyond that, two directions suit people from this field.

Training and development specialist. Projected growth of about 11%, with a median wage of \$65,850 in 2024. Companies and agencies need people who can teach adults new tools and new

ways of working, and teachers, librarians and assistants already know how to explain things to people who are nervous about learning. *The bridge*: the short skill chapter on learning and teaching, and the skill chapter on designing and creating for course materials.

School or library AI guide. Only one teacher in five works at a school with an AI policy, and teachers at those schools save more time than teachers at schools without one. Schools and libraries will need people to set up approved tools, train staff and help families. This is a direction with no job count yet, and it suits teacher assistants, office staff and library assistants who learn the tools early. *The bridge*: the skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing.

Where to go next

If you teach, start with the chapter on teaching AI who you are, so your AI assistant knows your grade, subject and students' needs from the first request. Librarians and library staff should read the skill chapter on investigating and researching. School office staff will find much of their work in the customer service deep dive. If you have already lost work, the part of the book called *At the Wall* is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Lorna is a composite, built from how elementary teachers plan and differentiate a week, and from the Gallup and Walton Family Foundation finding that weekly AI users save about six hours a week. The twenty-six students, the twenty minutes and the student whose scores dropped are illustrative. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook and pages that cite it.

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Business and Office

Administrative assistants, receptionists, office managers, customer service representatives, bookkeeping and payroll clerks, data entry and file clerks, HR coordinators, and everyone who keeps an office running

Denise has been the administrative assistant at a regional heating and cooling supply company for fourteen years. She knows every contractor by their voice on the phone, which invoices always come back with questions, and which delivery driver needs his route printed on paper. Last spring, the company brought in software that books deliveries, sends invoices and answers the routine "where is my order" calls on its own. The office went from four people to two.

Denise is one of the two. What set her apart was the week she spent with the software vendor. She learned how the tools worked, tuned them to the company's customers in the first month, and wrote the one-page guide everyone else used. The owner now calls her the person who makes the system work.

Her story is the one this chapter is about. Office work is where AI is cutting jobs fastest, and it is also where one person who learns the tools can become the person the whole business depends on.

What is changing

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that overall employment in office and administrative support jobs will decline from 2025 to 2035. The steepest drops are in the most routine work: word processors and typists are projected to fall 34%, data entry keyers 26%, order clerks 18%, payroll and timekeeping clerks 16% and file clerks 16%, all among the fastest-declining jobs in the country.

The large office jobs are shrinking more slowly. Bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks, about 1.5 million people, are projected to decline 6%, because software has automated many routine tasks. Customer service representatives, about 2.7 million people, are projected to decline 5% as more tasks are automated and customers use self-service apps. Secretaries and administrative assistants, about 3.5 million people, are projected to decline 2%, and the government names AI systems and digital tools as one reason, since staff can now prepare their own documents.

The same projections carry a second message that gets less attention. Office and administrative jobs are still expected to have about 1.7 million openings a year, mostly to replace people who retire or move on. The work is shrinking, and it is still very large.

Employers are also changing what these jobs are. Most are shrinking office teams slowly, as people leave, and handing the people who stay new work: checking what the tools produce, handling the hard cases and teaching the tools the company's answers. The people who learn the new work are the ones being moved into it. The customer service deep dive has the survey numbers behind this.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Receptionist	Answering routine calls and messages, booking appointments, reminders	The welcome, the upset caller, knowing who needs a person right now
Administrative or executive assistant	Drafting letters and minutes, scheduling, travel, expense reports	Judgment about priorities, discretion, managing relationships
Office manager	Vendor comparisons, contract tracking, supply orders, policy drafts	Running the place, people problems, decisions about money
Customer service representative	Simple questions, order status, first drafts of replies	Complicated problems, exceptions, keeping an angry customer

Bookkeeping and payroll clerk	Categorizing transactions, matching invoices, first-pass reconciliations	Catching what does not add up, questions from the owner, the sign-off
Data entry and file clerk	Reading forms and documents into systems, sorting and filing	Checking what the system got wrong, fixing the records that matter
HR coordinator	Job posting drafts, interview scheduling, policy questions, onboarding checklists	Every decision about a person's job, and the private conversations
Order and sales support clerk	Order entry, quote drafts, follow-up emails	The relationship with the customer and the problem nobody else can solve

What is going away, plainly

Work that mostly means typing, keying, filing, copying from one system to another or answering the same question many times a day is going away, and quickly. If that describes most of your day, the numbers above are about you, and it is better to know now than to find out in a meeting you were not invited to.

The good news is that you already know what the software does not: which customers matter most, where the paperwork goes wrong, who to call when something breaks, and how this office runs. A business needs exactly that knowledge from the person who runs its AI tools. With a few months of steady practice, you can be the Denise in your office: the one who sets up the tools, keeps them working well and teaches everyone else.

The Decision Line in the office

AI can draft the reply, pull up the customer's history, summarize the policy and suggest a refund amount. The decision to bend a rule, issue a refund, approve an expense or promise a delivery date stays with a person, because it is a promise made in the business's name. Decisions about people's jobs stay with people too.

AI can also make those decisions better. Before you decide on a refund, ask it to lay out the customer's order history, what the policy says, and what you did for similar customers last month. You

still make the call, and now you make it with everything in front of you.

One connected example: the inbox that sorts itself

Most offices have a shared inbox or a main phone line that buries someone every morning. Here is what it looks like once the tools are connected. Every new email is read by an AI assistant, which tags it as an order question, a billing question, a complaint or something else. Routine questions get a drafted reply that a person reviews and sends with one click. Complaints and anything unusual go straight to a named person, with a short summary at the top. Every message lands as a row in a spreadsheet, so on Friday the AI assistant can report how many of each kind came in and what is still open.

The business tools many offices already pay for, such as Microsoft 365 with Copilot, Google Workspace with Gemini, and help desk software like Zendesk or Freshdesk, include pieces of this, and an automation tool can connect the rest. To try the first step today with a copy of last week's messages, with names and account details removed, say to your AI assistant:

Here are 30 customer emails from last week, with names and account numbers removed. Sort them into groups by what the customer needs. For each group, tell me how many there were, give one example, and draft a reply I could reuse. List separately any email that sounds upset or unusual, so a person handles it. Then put the counts in a small table I can paste into Friday's update, and add a reminder to my calendar for Monday morning to follow up on the upset ones.

Check every reused reply against your written policy before anyone sends it, and make sure no upset customer ends up in an automatic reply.

New jobs this world is creating

The first new job is usually your own job, changed. Most employers are expanding what their people do, and the clearest path for most office workers is to become the person who runs, checks and improves the tools where they already work. Beyond that, these are directions the office world is moving.

The office's AI person. Small and midsize businesses rarely have an IT department, and someone has to set up the tools, write the guide and keep them working well. LinkedIn's 2026 list of fastest-growing U.S. jobs put AI consultants and strategists second. *The bridge:* the toolbox, setup and checking chapters of this book, plus one automation you build and document at your own desk.

Customer experience specialist. As AI takes the simple calls, the people who stay handle the hard ones, teach the AI the company's answers, and look after the customers who matter most. *The bridge:* the customer service deep dive in this book.

Healthcare reimbursement specialist. LinkedIn's list put this role sixth. It suits billing, bookkeeping and claims clerks who know how money moves through paperwork. *The bridge:* use an AI study partner to learn medical billing codes and payer rules, and look for certificate programs at a community college.

AI trainer and data annotator. Data annotators were fourth on LinkedIn's list, and AI companies pay people with subject knowledge to review and improve what their models produce. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing. Read any platform's terms and pay rates before you sign up.

Where to go next

If you work in an office, the setup chapter matters most for you, because a tool that knows your office's customers, tone and rules saves you the most time. Then read the skill chapters on organizing information and data, and on testing, checking and reviewing. If you work in customer service, read the deep dive on that role. If

you have already lost an office job, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Denise is a composite, built from the kinds of small and midsize businesses described in reporting on office automation. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2025 to 2035 projections and its Occupational Outlook Handbook. The point about employers expanding frontline roles draws on Gartner's April 2026 survey, covered in the customer service deep dive. The fastest-growing jobs come from LinkedIn's 2026 Jobs on the Rise list, as reported by Allwork.Space.

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Technology and Design

Software developers and testers, help desk and support specialists, network and systems administrators, data analysts and data scientists, security analysts, web developers, drafters and product designers, and everyone who builds and runs the systems the rest of us use

Kwame runs the help desk for a regional chain of auto parts stores, sixty locations and about nine hundred employees. Two years ago his days were password resets, printers that would not print and the same five questions from every new store manager. Then the company added an AI chatbot that answers the routine questions and resets passwords on its own, and the help desk went from four people to two.

Kwame is one of the two, and his job looks different now. Every Monday he asks the company's approved AI assistant to read the past week's tickets, group them by cause and tell him what keeps coming back. Last month it noticed that the card readers at three stores dropped offline every Tuesday morning, a pattern buried across forty tickets that each looked like a one-off. The cause turned out to be a scheduled update colliding with the morning rush. Kwame moved the update, wrote a short article so the chatbot could answer the question next time, and walked the store managers through the fix on a call.

The chatbot handles the easy tickets. Kwame decides what changes on the company's systems, who gets access to what and when a problem is serious enough to wake someone up. He also teaches the chatbot, one article at a time, and his input now carries weight with the IT director whenever the company weighs new software, because he knows what the stores run into every day.

What is changing

Technology is the field building AI, and it is also one of the first fields AI is reshaping. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that computer and information technology jobs as a group will grow faster than average from 2025 to 2035, with about 280,000 openings a year. Within that group, the routine work is shrinking. Computer programmers, about 111,000 people, are projected to decline 7% as companies use AI to automate repetitive coding. Computer support specialists, about 903,000 people, are projected to decline 3% as organizations use chatbots and other automated tools for troubleshooting.

The work of designing, building and protecting systems is growing. Software developers, about 1.7 million people, are projected to grow 10%, partly because of software development for AI itself. Information security analysts are projected to grow 21%, and the government names the increased use of AI among the reasons security matters more. Data scientists are projected to grow 35%, one of the fastest rates of any occupation. Drafters, whose work moved from paper to design software years ago, are projected to grow only 1%, since the software lets engineers and architects do more of that work themselves.

Developers have taken to AI tools faster than almost anyone. In Stack Overflow's 2025 survey of developers, most respondents said they used or planned to use AI tools in their work, and many also said they did not fully trust the accuracy of what those tools produce. Both answers make sense. AI writes code quickly, and someone still has to know whether the code is right.

The engineering work itself is moving. Writing code from scratch matters less, and connecting AI into the way a company works matters more: linking AI agents to the ticketing, billing, scheduling and customer systems a company already runs, redesigning the workflow so AI handles the routine steps and people handle the exceptions, and building it so the whole thing can grow without breaking. Engineers in job interviews today are being asked how

they have used AI tools to automate their own work and how they would scale it, which shows where employers see the work going.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Software developer	First drafts of code, tests, documentation, explaining old code	The design, the review, what goes into production and why
Quality assurance analyst or tester	Test cases, test data, bug report drafts, running routine tests	Judging what matters to users, finding the bug nobody thought to test for
Help desk or support specialist	Password resets, routine questions, ticket sorting, knowledge articles	The hard problem, the frustrated user, spotting the pattern behind the tickets
Network or systems administrator	Log reviews, scripts, change plans, status reports	Every change to live systems, access decisions, the call during an outage
Data analyst or data scientist	Cleaning data, first-pass analysis, charts, queries	Asking the right question, judging what the numbers mean, telling the story honestly
Information security analyst	Sorting alerts, summarizing threats, drafting reports	Deciding what is a real attack, the response, the escalation
Web developer	Page layouts, code, testing across devices, accessibility checks	What the client needs, the quality of the finished site
Drafter or product designer	Drawing revisions, design variations, documentation	Fit, function, safety and the client's intent

What is going away, plainly

Writing routine code from a clear specification, answering password and printer tickets, building simple websites by hand, redrawing the same part with small changes and writing the first version of documentation are shrinking quickly. If those tasks fill most of your week, move toward the work that sits around them: understanding what users need, reviewing and testing what AI writes, keeping systems safe and running, and explaining technology to the people who use it.

Help desk staff and junior developers feel this first. You already know more than you think: which systems break, how users work day to day, and where the documentation is wrong. Become the person who teaches the chatbot, reviews the AI's code and keeps the knowledge base current, as Kwame did, and you move from the work being automated to the work of running the automation.

The Decision Line in technology

AI can write the code, the script and the change plan. A person decides what goes into production, who gets access to which systems, what data is collected and kept, and how to respond when something goes wrong, because those decisions carry the company's security and its customers' trust. Code that ships carries the name of the team that shipped it, whoever typed it first. Passwords, keys and customer data never go into an AI tool your employer has not approved.

AI can make those calls more complete. Before a change to a live system, ask your AI assistant to list everything the change could affect, the steps to undo it and the questions a careful reviewer would ask. You still approve the change, with the risks laid out in front of you.

One connected example: the help desk that learns

Every ticket that comes in is read by the AI assistant, which tags its cause, suggests a fix from the knowledge base and answers the routine ones directly. Anything touching access, money or a store that cannot sell goes straight to a person, with a summary at the top. Every Monday, a report lists the causes that came back most often, and for each one the AI assistant drafts a knowledge article for a person to check. Over a few months, the same questions stop coming in.

You can try the first step with material you already have, with names and account details removed. Say to your AI assistant:

Here are last month's help desk tickets, with names, emails and account details removed: [paste or attach]. Group them by root cause, count each group, and list the five causes that cost the most time. For each of the five, draft a short knowledge article a user could follow on their own, and tell me which ones point to a fix we should make on our side. Then put a reminder on my calendar for the first Monday of next month to run this again.

Check each article against the real fix before anyone sees it, and test the steps on a spare machine.

New jobs this world is creating

For most people in technology, the clearest step is to take on the review, testing and teaching that AI tools now need, in the job you already have. Beyond that, three directions are growing fast.

Information security analyst. Projected to grow 21% from 2025 to 2035. It suits help desk staff and system administrators who already know how systems fail and how people get fooled. *The bridge*: an AI study partner for an entry-level security certificate, and the skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing.

Data analyst and data scientist. Data scientists are projected to grow 35%. Analysts who can ask good questions of data, and explain the answers in plain words, are needed in every field in this book. *The bridge*: the skill chapter on organizing information and data, and practice with your own workplace's numbers.

AI integration, automation and quality. Companies need engineers who can connect AI agents to the systems they already run and redesign the workflow around them, and people who can test what the agents produce and build the monitoring that shows when something goes wrong. Developers, administrators and testers who know how a company's systems fit together bring what this work needs. These roles go by many titles and have no single job count yet, so treat this as a direction to build toward while you earn. *The bridge*: the skill chapters on building products and services, and on testing, checking and reviewing, plus one workflow of your own that you automate from start to finish.

Where to go next

If you work in technology, read the skill chapters on testing, checking and reviewing, and on building products and services; they cover the work growing around AI tools. Help desk and support staff will also find much of their work in the customer service deep dive. If you have already lost work, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Kwame is a composite, built from how help desks at mid-sized retailers commonly work; the card reader story and the staffing change are illustrative. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2025 to 2035 projections, read on October 18, 2026. The developer survey figures come from Stack Overflow's 2025 Developer Survey.

Sources

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Science, Agriculture and Environment

Farmers, ranchers and farm managers, farmworkers and equipment operators, agricultural and food science technicians, lab and biological technicians, environmental scientists and specialists, foresters and conservation workers, research scientists, and everyone who grows our food and studies the world around us

Gary farms eighteen hundred acres of corn and soybeans in central Iowa with his daughter. Every winter used to mean a kitchen table covered in paper: yield maps from the combine, soil test results, seed catalogs, fertilizer quotes and the crop insurance calendar, all of which had to come together into a plan for spring.

This winter his daughter loaded last season's records into an AI assistant and asked it to build a table of yield by field, set against what they planted, how much fertilizer each field got and how much rain fell. It pointed out that two fields on the east side had come in well below the rest for three years running, in the low spots each time, and suggested drainage as a cause worth checking. It also listed every planting and insurance deadline for the season and put each one on the family calendar.

Gary walked those two fields in March with a shovel and found standing water exactly where the AI assistant had pointed. What to plant, how much to spend and whether to put in drainage tile were his calls, made with his banker and his agronomist. The paperwork that used to take most of January took a weekend.

What is changing

Farming has been industrialized for more than a century, and AI is the newest step. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that

farmers, ranchers and agricultural managers will decline 3% from 2025 to 2035 as farms consolidate into fewer, larger operations, and that agricultural workers will decline 2% as farms adopt technologies that make each worker more productive. The government expects automated tractors and robotic harvesters to shift jobs toward equipment operators and away from hand labor. Sprayers that use cameras to spot weeds and treat only the weeds are already in fields.

Science and environmental work is growing. Environmental scientists and specialists are projected to grow 6%, driven by public concern about environmental hazards and by businesses working to reduce their impact. Agricultural and food scientists are also projected to grow 6%, and biological technicians 7%. In the lab, AI has already changed what is possible. The 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry went in part to Demis Hassabis and John Jumper for AlphaFold, an AI system that predicts the shape of proteins, work that once took a lab months or years for a single protein.

The roles in this world

Role	What AI changes	What stays yours
Farmer or ranch manager	Yield and cost analysis, planning, records, market and weather summaries	What to plant or raise, what to spend, the land and the animals
Farmworker or equipment operator	Guidance systems, automated steering, maintenance reminders	Running the machine safely, handling what the machine cannot
Agricultural or food science technician	Sample logging, data entry, report drafts, test scheduling	Running the tests correctly, catching the bad sample, safety
Lab or biological technician	Protocols, literature searches, data analysis, inventory	The bench work, noticing when a result looks wrong, lab safety
Environmental scientist or specialist	Reading monitoring data, regulations and permits, report drafts, maps	Fieldwork, judgment on the findings, what goes in the report you sign

Forester or conservation worker	Satellite and drone imagery, inventory counts, management plans	Walking the land, judging forest health, working with landowners
Research scientist	Literature reviews, analysis code, grant and paper drafts	The question, the experiment design, what the results mean

What is going away, plainly

Hand labor in the field keeps shrinking as machines take over planting, spraying and some harvesting. In the lab and the office, logging samples by hand, typing data from instruments into spreadsheets, combing through hundreds of papers and drafting routine reports are going quickly. If those tasks fill most of your day, move toward the work that needs a person on the ground or at the bench: running and fixing the machines, catching the result that looks wrong, and explaining what the data means to the people who have to act on it.

The Decision Line in science, agriculture and environment

AI can analyze the yields, read the monitoring data, search the research and draft the report. A person decides what to plant and spend, whether a result is real, what a finding means for the people downstream and what goes into a report submitted to a regulator, because those decisions carry money, public health and the law. Pesticide applications follow the label and the applicator's license, whatever a tool suggests.

AI can make those calls more complete. Before a decision on a field, a sample or a site, ask your AI assistant to lay out the data behind it, what else could explain the pattern and what you should check in person. Then go and look, as Gary did with his shovel.

One connected example: the farm that reports to itself

Soil moisture sensors in a few fields and the local weather forecast feed a shared sheet every morning. An AI assistant reads it and

sends the grower a short message before breakfast: which fields need water today, which can wait and what rain is coming. Equipment hours from each tractor land in the same sheet, and the AI assistant drafts a maintenance list before the busy season. At the end of the year, everything is already in one place for the planning conversation. The grower decides every irrigation and every repair. You can try the first step with records you already have. Say to your AI assistant:

Here are my records for last season: [yields by field, what I planted, fertilizer and other inputs, rainfall, or attach the files]. Build a table that compares the fields, and list the three that did worst and the possible reasons I should check on the ground. Then draft a spring planning checklist with these deadlines: [your planting, insurance and program dates], and put each deadline on my calendar with a reminder two weeks before.

Check the table against your own records, and take anything about money, insurance or chemicals to your agronomist, insurance agent or extension office.

New jobs this world is creating

For most people in this field, the clearest step is to become the person who runs the new equipment and data well where they already work. Beyond that, three directions suit people from this world.

Agricultural equipment operator and technician. The government expects mechanization to shift farm jobs toward people who run and maintain the machines. Farmworkers who learn the guidance systems and the repairs become the people farms cannot do without. *The bridge:* manufacturer training, and an AI study partner to turn a thick equipment manual into a quiz you can take in the cab while parked.

Environmental scientist or specialist. Projected to grow 6% from 2025 to 2035. Technicians and field crews who already collect the samples can move toward the analysis and reporting. *The bridge:*

the skill chapter on investigating and researching, and a certificate or degree program, studied with an AI tutor.

Precision agriculture and drone specialist. Farms and conservation groups increasingly use drones, satellite images and sensor data to watch crops and land. This direction has no single job count yet, so treat it as a possibility to test while you earn. A commercial drone license is a clear first step. *The bridge:* the skill chapter on organizing information and data.

Where to go next

If you farm or work the land, start with the chapter on putting AI in your pocket, so voice and your phone do the work in the field. Lab and environmental staff should read the skill chapters on investigating and researching, and on testing, checking and reviewing. If you have already lost work, the part of the book called At the Wall is written for you.

Behind this chapter

Gary and his daughter are composites, built from how family grain farms in the Midwest commonly plan a season; the acreage, the drainage problem and the weekend are illustrative. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2025 to 2035 projections, read on October 18, 2026. The AlphaFold account comes from the Nobel Prize announcement.

Sources

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PART THREE

Skills Everyone Shares

Organizing Information and Data

Turning piles of notes, emails, files and numbers into something you can find, trust and use

Almost every job has a pile. A paralegal has boxes of documents and a trial date. A project manager has six weeks of meeting notes and nobody is sure who agreed to what. A tax preparer has a client who sends receipts in a shoebox, in March. An office manager has forty vendor contracts and no idea which ones renew next month. A plumber has a truck full of receipts and a notebook of jobs.

The jobs are different, and the skill underneath is the same: take a mess, give it a shape, and keep it current. AI is very good at the first two and can help a great deal with the third. The person who can do this well becomes the person everyone depends on, because they are the one who knows where everything is.

There is a second reason this skill matters now. AI gives better answers when the information it works from is organized. A tidy tracker can be searched, summarized, charted and connected to other tools. A pile of emails cannot. As more work runs through connected tools, organized information is what everything else is built on.

Who uses this skill

Paralegals and legal assistants, business and data analysts, project and program managers, tax preparers and bookkeepers, office administrators and executive assistants, claims adjusters and loan processors, researchers and lab coordinators, teachers tracking student progress, nurses and unit secretaries working in approved systems, contractors and tradespeople, event planners, nonprofit coordinators and anyone who has ever said "I know I saw that somewhere."

Three moves

Organizing comes down to three moves, and AI helps with each one.

- **Give it a shape.** Decide what one row stands for (a document, a task, a client, a job) and which columns you need. AI is good at suggesting a structure you would not have thought of.
- **Fill it and clean it.** Pull the details out of emails, notes and files into the rows, remove duplicates, and flag what is missing. AI does this in minutes, and this is where it needs the most checking.
- **Keep it alive.** A tracker that is not kept up to date is worse than none, because people trust it. Forms, automations and a short weekly review keep it current.

Try it yourself: from a pile to a tracker

The situation. You have three weeks of emails, notes and messages about something you are responsible for tracking: requests, documents, tasks, clients or jobs. Nobody, including you, can say for sure what is open, what is done and what is missing.

What you need. The material, copied into one place or uploaded as files, with anything confidential removed or replaced unless you are using a tool your employer has approved for it. A spreadsheet to put the result in.

What you know going in. AI is quick and good at pulling details out of messy text. Its two common mistakes are filling a blank with a plausible guess and merging two items that only look alike. The request below is written to stop both.

The words to type:

I'm going to give you [three weeks of emails and notes about the client requests I track]. First, suggest the columns a tracker for this should have, with one sentence on why each one matters, and wait for my OK. Then turn everything into a table with one row per [request]. Use the exact wording from my material for names, dates

and amounts. If a detail is missing, write MISSING in that cell and do not guess. List any possible duplicates and any items where two sources disagree in a separate section below the table. Finally, tell me the five rows you are least sure about and why.

What comes back. A proposed set of columns to approve, then a table you can paste into a spreadsheet, a list of duplicates and conflicts, and the rows it is least sure about.

What to check. Pick ten rows at random and check each one against the original email or note. Read every row it flagged as uncertain. Count the items in your source and the rows in the table; if the numbers differ, ask it which items it merged or skipped. Every MISSING cell is a question for someone, and those questions are often the most useful thing the exercise produces.

Push it further. Ask for a short summary at the top: how many items are open, how many are overdue, and who is waiting on whom. That summary is often what your manager wants from you every week.

Build it once: keeping it alive

A one-time cleanup helps for a week. A tracker that updates itself helps for a year. Here is the connected version, using the kinds of tools from the toolbox chapter.

- **New items come in through a form.** Instead of requests arriving by email, text and hallway conversation, people fill in a short form (Google Forms or Microsoft Forms). Each answer lands as a new row in your spreadsheet automatically.
- **An automation watches the dates.** Every morning, an automation tool checks for rows that are past due and sends you, or the owner, a short reminder.
- **AI writes the weekly summary.** Once a week, your AI assistant reads the tracker and drafts a summary of what is open, what closed and what is stuck, which you review before it goes out.
- **The spreadsheet itself helps.** Copilot in Excel and Gemini in Google Sheets can now sort, categorize and summarize columns

when you ask in plain words.

You stay in charge of what goes in, what counts as done, and what the summary says. The tools keep it moving between your reviews.

Make it yours

The base request works for almost anyone. These short versions show what changes for different jobs, where the details matter.

Business analyst: a requirements and decisions log

What one row is: one requirement or one decision. *Columns:* ID, the requirement or decision, who said it and when, status (agreed, proposed by one person, or open), owner, related test case. *The nuance:* separate what the group agreed from what one person said, and point every row back to its source. *Add to the base request:* "Mark each item as agreed, proposed or open based on how it was discussed, and give the source for each."

Paralegal: a document index and chronology

What one row is: one document or one event. *Columns:* date, document, author, recipients, key facts, page or Bates number. *The nuance:* every entry must point to a page, and a chronology must never fill a gap with a guess, because a wrong date in a timeline can mislead a lawyer and a court. Client documents go only into tools your firm has approved, and a lawyer reviews the result. *Add to the base request:* "Give the page or Bates number for every fact. If a date is unclear, write UNCLEAR and quote the passage."

Project manager: a RAID log from meeting notes

What one row is: one risk, assumption, issue or decision. *Columns:* type, description, owner, due date, status, the meeting it came from. *The nuance:* an item with no owner is the most important thing to flag, because it will not get done. *Add to the base request:* "List every item with no owner or no date at the top."

Tax preparer: a client document checklist

What one row is: one document you expect from one client.

Columns: client code, document expected (for example, W-2 or 1099), received or not, date received, notes. *The nuance:* use a client code instead of a name, and never paste Social Security numbers, account numbers or returns into a public AI tool. Federal rules limit how tax preparers may use and share their clients' tax information, so client work belongs in your approved tax software. *Add to the base request:* "Here is last year's list of documents for each client code. Build this year's checklist and mark what is still missing."

Office administrator: a contracts and renewals tracker

What one row is: one contract. *Columns:* vendor, what it covers, start date, end date, notice deadline, renews automatically or not, annual cost, owner. *The nuance:* the notice deadline is the date that costs money, because missing it can lock you into another year. AI can read the contracts and pull the dates, and you check every date against the contract itself. *Add to the base request:* "Sort by notice deadline and flag every contract with a deadline within the next 90 days."

Tradesperson: a jobs and materials log

What one row is: one job. *Columns:* job, date, materials used, material cost, hours, invoiced or not, paid or not. *The nuance:* most of this information starts as a voice note in the truck or a receipt on the dashboard. *Add to the base request:* "Here are this week's voice note transcripts and receipt photos. Add each job to my log and list any job I worked but have not invoiced." The construction and skilled trades chapter shows how this connects to quoting and invoicing.

Common mistakes

- **Letting AI fill the blanks.** A guessed date or amount looks exactly like a real one. Always ask for MISSING instead.
- **Too many columns.** Start with the five to eight that answer the questions people ask you. Add more only when someone needs

them.

- **Copies everywhere.** Keep one tracker as the single source, and send people a link instead of a copy.
- **Mixed formats.** Dates written three different ways cannot be sorted. Ask AI to put every date in one format.
- **Sensitive data in the wrong tool.** Customer, patient and client details go only into tools approved for them.
- **Never checking again.** Spot-check a few rows every week, especially the ones the automation added.

The Decision Line for this skill

AI can sort, extract, fill and summarize. You decide what matters, what is true and what to do about it. A tidy table can still be wrong, and the cleaner it looks, the more people will trust it, so checking is part of the job.

How it expands your reach

The person who knows where everything is gets pulled into the decisions. Within your current job, the team starts bringing you the messy problems first, and you end up shaping how information moves across the team. Every step of that starts with the same three moves in this chapter, done well and kept up.

Behind this chapter

The roles and examples are drawn from the areas map for this book. The note on tax preparers refers to federal rules on how preparers may use and disclose their clients' tax information. The descriptions of spreadsheet AI features come from the toolbox chapter and should be checked against current versions.

Sources

- Federal rule on consent before a tax preparer uses or discloses tax return information, 26 CFR 301.7216-3, via Cornell Law School: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/26/301.7216-3>

Designing and Creating

Almost every job makes things people look at. The restaurant owner needs a menu and a sign for the specials. The contractor needs a proposal that shows the customer what the finished kitchen could look like. The teacher needs a worksheet that does not look like it came off a copier in 1995. The office manager needs slides for Monday, and the nonprofit needs a flyer for Saturday. Most people who make these things were never trained in design, and it shows, which costs them customers, attention and sometimes the job.

AI design tools changed this almost overnight. Describe what you need, and within a minute you have several directions to choose from, in the right sizes for print, a website and a phone screen. A professional designer can now try twenty ideas in the time one used to take. Someone with no design training can make something clean and clear on the first day.

What AI cannot supply on its own is the reason the piece exists: who it is for, what it has to make them feel or do, and what your business stands for. That is the part this chapter is about, along with the quick checks that keep a good-looking piece from going out with a wrong price or a misleading picture.

Who uses this skill

Graphic designers, marketers, photographers and video editors use it all day. So do small business owners, real estate agents, teachers, trainers, event planners, contractors who show customers a design before they build it, and anyone who has ever made a flyer, a menu, a slide deck or a social media post. If people judge your work partly by how it looks, this skill is yours.

The moves

- Write the brief before you make anything: who it is for, the one thing they should notice first, where it will appear and what it must say word for word.
- Ask for several different directions instead of one answer, and choose.
- Keep a style kit of your colors, fonts, logo and a few examples you like, and give it to the tool every time.
- Look at the result the way your customer will: at a glance, on a phone, from across the room.
- Check the words, numbers and dates on the finished piece, because AI image tools still garble text.

Try it yourself

The situation. You need something made that people will look at: a flyer, a menu, a sign, a slide, a social media post or a one-page handout.

What you need. The exact words it must say, and one or two examples of a look you like, from your own business or anywhere else.

What you know going in. Who will see it, where they will see it, what you want them to do next, and your colors and logo if you have them.

The words to type.

I need a [flyer] for [what] aimed at [who]. Here is the text it must include, exactly as written: [text]. Here is the look I want: [colors, fonts, or describe or attach an example]. Give me three different directions, each with one line on why it would work for [who]. Then make the strongest one at full size, plus a version sized for [a phone screen or printing]. Do not change any of my words.

What comes back. Three options with the thinking behind each, and a finished version in two sizes. Seeing the directions side by

side is often what helps you decide what you wanted in the first place.

What to check. Every word, price, date, phone number and address on the finished piece, letter by letter. Make sure nothing in it looks like another company's logo or a well-known character, and that any people shown are either invented or have agreed to appear. Everything else, like the colors, layout and spacing, you can judge at a glance.

Push it further. Ask: Look at this the way [your customer] would in three seconds on a phone. What do they notice first, what do they miss, and what one change would fix that?

Build it once

The biggest time saver is a style kit saved where your AI assistant can always reach it, such as the tool's project or setup instructions: your colors, fonts, logo, the way you talk to customers and three pieces you are proud of. From then on, every request starts on brand.

Then connect the routine pieces. A restaurant can have the kitchen text the day's specials to a shared number or form. The AI assistant turns them into a specials board and a social post in the house style, sends both to the owner's phone for approval, and posts at eleven once she taps yes. A contractor can do the same with proposals: the measurements and notes from the site visit go into a form, and a draft proposal comes back with a concept drawing, clearly labeled as a concept, for the contractor to check and send.

Make it yours

Graphic designer. Let the AI tools produce the first round of concepts, the variations and every resized version for each channel. Spend your time on the brief, on choosing and refining the direction, and on the details clients notice, such as the type, the spacing and whether the piece feels like their brand. The

production work that once filled your week now takes an afternoon.

Restaurant owner. Ask for a new menu layout from your current menu, with your prices and descriptions exactly as written, in your colors. Check every price and every allergy note yourself before anything goes to the printer, since a wrong price is a promise at the register.

Carpenter or remodeling contractor. Ask for a concept image of the finished deck or kitchen from your plan and the customer's photos, to help them picture it before they sign. Label it as a concept every time. A picture of work you have not done must never be shown as a photo of a finished job.

Trainer. Paste your session notes and ask for a clean slide deck and a one-page handout in your company's template, with one idea per slide. Check that every fact and step matches your notes, then cut anything you would not say out loud.

Common mistakes

- Skipping the brief and taking whatever comes back.
- Choosing the first draft because it looks finished.
- Letting AI type the words into an image without proofreading them.
- Drifting off brand, so every piece looks like it came from a different business.
- Asking for something in the style of a named living artist, or using a real person's face or voice without permission, for work you will sell or publish.
- Showing AI-made images as if they were photos of real products, real places or real work.

The Decision Line for this skill

AI can draft, vary and resize; what the piece says, whose face or work appears in it, and whether it is good enough and honest

enough to carry your name stays with you.

Ask how to get better

After a design task, ask your AI assistant: "What would a professional designer change about this, and what should I put in my brief next time so the first draft is closer?"

How it expands your reach

Good-looking work brings in customers, so people who can produce it quickly become valuable in any small business. An office worker who can turn out clean flyers, slides and posts often becomes the person everyone asks, and that can grow into a marketing role. Designers who direct AI tools can take on motion, video and web work that once went to someone else, as the chapter on arts, media and entertainment describes. Tradespeople who show customers a clear concept before they build tend to win more of the jobs they bid on. The skill chapter on building products and services shows how a good design becomes something people can buy.

Behind this chapter

This chapter draws on common design practice, such as working from a brief, testing several directions and keeping a style guide, applied to the AI image, layout and slide tools covered in the toolbox chapter. The rules on copyright and on using a person's face or voice are covered, with sources, in the chapter on arts, media and entertainment. No outside figures are cited.

Sources

- *No outside figures or studies are cited in this chapter. The copyright and likeness sources sit in the Arts, Media and Entertainment chapter.*

Testing, Checking and Reviewing

Every job has work someone has to check before it goes out the door: the invoice before it is sent, the chart note before it is signed, the quote before the customer sees it, the load plan before the trucks roll. For most of us, checking used to mean looking over our own work or a coworker's. Now a growing share of the first drafts in every field comes from AI, and the person who checks them well has become one of the most valuable people in the building.

AI writes with the same confident tone whether it is right or wrong. It can invent a citation that looks real, carry a number from the wrong row, or follow a policy from last year. In 2023 two New York lawyers were fined after filing a brief that cited court cases ChatGPT had made up. In 2024 a Canadian tribunal held Air Canada responsible for a refund policy its website chatbot invented. In both cases a person could have caught the mistake in a few minutes, and nobody looked.

This chapter is about looking: how to check what AI gives you, how to build checking into the work so it happens on busy days too, and how to make sure your team can still do the job on the day the tools are down.

Looking well does not mean redoing everything. If you check every line the AI produces, you have only added work. The skill is knowing where to look. Let AI run the routine steps of the workflow, such as sorting, matching, drafting, filing and sending reminders. Your own checking time goes to the few things that would cause serious harm if they were wrong: money, safety, health, legal promises and anything that goes out under your name. Everything else gets a spot check, and the spot checks tell you over time how much more the tool can be trusted with.

Who uses this skill

Everyone who uses AI at work, which is quickly becoming everyone. Some jobs are built around it already: editors, auditors, quality inspectors, medical coders, paralegals, compliance analysts and anyone who signs off on someone else's work. In other jobs the checking is quieter, like the bookkeeper who matches every total, the dispatcher who reads every customer update before it goes out, or the electrician who redoes the load calculation by hand.

Before AI, many offices ran smoothly because of a few people whose work nobody had to check. Their numbers were right, their letters went out clean, and everyone knew it. Now those same people are often given a new job on top of the old one: reviewing what the AI produces, while also picking up work from coworkers who have left. Something has to give. The review gets rushed, or it gets handed to someone newer who has not yet learned what a wrong answer looks like. Either way, the risk builds up quietly in the work nobody looked at closely.

AI does a lot of the work now, and reviewing it is the part that keeps the business safe. The people best at reviewing are the ones who already knew the work cold, and they become hard to replace. Many managers see this and feel stuck. The technology is changing around them, leadership wants the savings, and arguing to keep the old checks or to protect one experienced person's time can feel like a political battle they cannot win. If you have been on either side of that battle, you know how it goes.

If you are that experienced person, make your reviewing visible. Keep the review sheet and the mistake log described later in this chapter, so the checks you do show up on the record as work. If you are the manager, plan review time into the job the same way you plan the work itself, and make sure at least two people can check each kind of work, so the business never depends on one person's memory.

The moves

- List every claim that could be wrong: facts, numbers, dates, names, quotes and anything that sounds like a rule.
- Ask for the source behind every point, even when the AI is summarizing your own emails, meeting notes, photos, articles or documents, so you can go straight to the original. A point with no source is a guess until you find one.
- Check the ones that would do the most damage first, against the original source rather than a summary of it.
- For the numbers that matter most, redo the math yourself or have a second tool redo it from scratch.
- Test the tool on questions where you already know the answer, so you learn where it is strong and where it slips in your kind of work.
- Write down what you found, so the same mistake gets caught faster next time.

Try it yourself

The situation. An AI assistant has given you an answer with facts and numbers you are about to use in an email, a report or a decision.

What you need. The answer, and access to the sources it should rest on.

What you know going in. Which parts of the answer you already know to be true, which parts would cause the most trouble if wrong, and who the answer is going to.

The words to type.

Here is an answer I got from an AI assistant: [paste]. List every claim in it that could be wrong, including each fact, number, date, name, quote and rule. For each one, tell me how I can check it and where: the original source, a calculation I can redo or a person to ask. Mark the three that would do the most damage if they were

wrong. Do not tell me whether they are right. I will check them myself.

What comes back. A checklist built from the answer itself, with the riskiest items at the top. Asking the tool to list the claims, instead of asking whether it was right, keeps it from simply defending its own work.

What to check. Start with the three it marked, then anything you would be embarrassed to get wrong in front of a customer or a boss. Open the source yourself. A link the AI assistant gives you is only a lead until you have read the page.

Push it further. Ask for five test questions on the same topic where you already know the answers. Run them every month or so, and you will learn how far to trust the tool in your own field.

Build it once

Checking is easy to skip on a busy day, so build it into the flow of the work. Every AI draft that will leave your hands lands first as a row in a review sheet, with who it is for, the date and a status of drafted, checked or sent. A simple automation won't let anything go out until a person marks it checked. On the routine items, check one in ten in full and the rest for the riskiest parts. When you find a mistake, log what kind it was, such as a wrong number, an old policy or a made-up source.

Once a month, ask your AI assistant to read the log and tell you which mistakes keep coming back. Then fix the cause, usually by adding a line to the tool's setup ("always use the 2026 price list", "never quote a policy without the page number") or by giving it the right document to work from. Over a few months the log gets shorter, and you can show your boss exactly how much safer the work has become.

The Paper Test

Checking the answers is half of this skill. The other half is making sure the work can still get done when the AI tools are not there at

all. Tools go down for many reasons: an outage at the vendor, a cyberattack, a contract that lapses, or a company that switches products over a weekend. When a store's register goes down, the clerk who can still make change and write a receipt by hand keeps the doors open. Every team that now leans on AI needs that person, and needs to know who it is before the day it happens.

The Paper Test is a simple way to find out. Once or twice a year, a team switches off its AI tools for a set window and runs a normal stretch of work without them. Whatever breaks is a gap to fix while things are calm.

Annette, the dispatcher from the chapter on transportation and logistics, leads her company's Paper Test twice a year. The first time, they ran a Monday morning with the AI assistant switched off and found three gaps within the first hour. The list of drivers with medical cards coming due lived only in the AI assistant's reminders. The note that one receiver's dock closes at two on Mondays was buried in an old email nobody else could find. And only Annette knew how to rebuild the week's board from the load sheets. The fixes were small: a weekly export of the board and the renewal list to a shared sheet, a printed page of dock hours and customer quirks, and a one-page Monday checklist that a second dispatcher has now practiced. The next test ran clean.

To run your own, pick the five things that must happen even on the worst day, such as getting paid, serving the customers waiting today, keeping people safe and meeting the deadlines that carry penalties. Switch the tools off for an hour or a morning, with your manager's agreement and on a day you choose. Write down every place someone got stuck, fix those gaps, and run it again in six months. The person who keeps the paper version current, and can teach it to others, becomes the one the business relies on, because that person can keep the work going whether the tools are up or down.

Make it yours

Paralegal. Let the AI assistant build the chronology, sort the exhibits and draft the cover letter. Then spend your checking time where a mistake would hurt: every case citation and quotation in the brief, which you pull up yourself in your firm's research tool, and the dates the argument rests on. Formatting and page order get a quick look.

Bookkeeper. Let the AI assistant categorize the month's transactions and match invoices to payments, which can be most of the work. Review what it flags as unmatched or unusual, tie each bank balance to the statement, and look closely at any total going to the owner or the tax preparer. The routine coffee and supply charges do not need a second look every month.

Electrician. Let the AI assistant draft the estimate, the material list and the permit paperwork. The load calculation is the one item you redo on your own worksheet, because a wrong number there is a safety problem, and you confirm the code edition your city uses. A miscount on the material list gets caught at the supply house.

Customer service representative. Let the AI assistant answer the routine questions and draft replies for the rest. Check every reply that involves money, a refund, a policy exception or an upset customer before it goes out, and spot-check ten of the routine ones each week against the written policy. Log anything that promised more than the policy allows, and send the list to whoever maintains the tool's answers.

Common mistakes

- Checking only the parts that look wrong. AI mistakes often sit in the parts that look most normal.
- Trusting a confident tone or a neat format as a sign of accuracy.
- Asking the same tool "Are you sure?" and accepting its yes.
- Checking the summary instead of the source.
- Skipping the check on the busiest days, which are the days mistakes are most likely to slip through.

- Pasting private customer or patient details into a second tool to check the first one.

The Decision Line for this skill

AI can help you find what to check, redo a calculation and compare two versions. Deciding that something is right enough to send, sign or act on stays with a person, because that person answers for it.

Ask how to get better

After a check, ask your AI assistant: "How could I have asked this so the answer was easier to check, and what should I learn so I can check this kind of work faster myself?"

How it expands your reach

Checking well is quickly turning into work of its own. Several field chapters in this book point here as the bridge to new roles. AI companies pay people with subject knowledge, in health care, law, finance and many other fields, to review and improve what their models produce; read any platform's terms and pay rates carefully before you sign up. Background investigators confirm who someone is and whether the story holds together, which is this skill applied to people and records. The people who give remote help to driverless trucks and robotaxis spend much of their day judging whether a machine has read a situation correctly. Within your own workplace, the person who sets up the review sheet, keeps the error log and leads the Paper Test is often the first one asked to take charge of how the team uses AI.

Behind this chapter

The lawyer sanctions come from *Mata v. Avianca* in federal court in New York (2023). The chatbot ruling is *Moffatt v. Air Canada*, decided by British Columbia's Civil Resolution Tribunal (2024). Annette is a composite, introduced in the chapter on transportation and logistics; her Paper Test findings are illustrative. The Paper Test is Joe's name for an exercise many

organizations already run as part of business continuity planning, applied here to AI tools.

Sources

- The New York Times, Here's what happens when your lawyer uses ChatGPT (May 27, 2023):
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/27/nyregion/avianca-airline-lawsuit-chatgpt.html>
- BBC, Air Canada chatbot misinformation: what travellers should know (February 2024):
<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20240222-air-canada-chatbot-misinformation-what-travellers-should-know>

Investigating and Researching

Every job has questions that need answers before someone can act. Is this new supplier reliable? What does the rule that changed last month require? Why did sales drop in March? Which assistance program fits this family? What work fits my skills now that my old job is changing? Finding those answers used to mean hours of searching, reading and taking notes, and most of us gave up long before we had read everything worth reading.

AI research tools now do much of that legwork. Ask a good question, and a research mode in most of the major AI assistants will search the web, read dozens of pages and write you a report with links within a few minutes. The toolbox chapter covers which tools do this today. What used to take a day now takes a coffee break.

The catch is that a research report sounds complete even when it is not. A tool can cite a page that does not say what the report claims, lean on an article from five years ago, or repeat the same claim from three websites that all copied one source. You do not need to check every sentence. You need to check the few facts your decision rests on, and that is what this chapter teaches.

The same care applies to what reaches you without your asking. In May 2023, an AI-generated picture of an explosion near the Pentagon spread across social media, shared by accounts that looked official, and the stock market dipped briefly before officials confirmed nothing had happened. Most fakes are smaller and reach us every week. A forwarded message I received recently claimed UNESCO had named one country's national anthem the best in the world, with a convincing story about how hard the judges found the decision. Fact-checkers have been debunking that hoax for years.

AI can help you check things like these by finding the original source, the fact-checks and the details that do not add up. It can also produce them. Treat any video, photo, article or forwarded message as unconfirmed until you have traced it to a source you trust, and if you cannot find where it came from, do not use it, share it or build on it.

Who uses this skill

Reporters, paralegals, analysts, librarians, buyers and caseworkers research for a living. So does the small business owner checking out a new supplier, the nurse looking up a medication guide for a patient's family, the teacher building a unit on a topic she has never taught, and the person after a layoff who is reading up on every company worth applying to. If your work ever starts with "let me look into that," this skill is yours.

Research can also lift work you already do. Picture an analyst who turns the company's sales numbers into a monthly report with charts. She tells her AI assistant her role, who reads the report, what she usually produces and what she usually works from, then asks what more it could bring. It suggests industry research and competitor figures she has never used, the company's own sales history going back five years, and trend lines that show where each number is heading as well as where it stands. She checks that every outside source is real and dated, adds the two that matter most, and her report changes from a list of numbers into an explanation of what is happening and why.

The moves

- Tell the AI assistant your role, who your work is for, what you usually produce and what you usually work from. Then ask what other sources it could bring in, real ones only with nothing invented, and what better or more insightful outputs it could suggest.
- Start with the decision. Write down what you will do differently depending on the answer, so the research stays aimed at it.

- Ask for a link and a date for every fact. When the AI is summarizing material you gave it, such as emails, meeting notes, pictures or documents, ask it to name which one each point came from.
- Look for the source closest to the original: the law itself, the company's own filing, the government data table, the manufacturer's manual.
- Ask what the sources disagree on, and what the tool could not find.
- Check the facts your decision rests on, and let the background reading stand.
- Keep a short log of what you found and where, so you can find it again.

Try it yourself

The situation. You need to understand something before you make a decision: a new supplier, a rule that affects your work, a product you are thinking of buying for your business, or a company you are about to interview with.

What you need. The question, the decision it feeds and the date you need to decide by.

What you know going in. What you already believe the answer is, which sources you already trust in your field, and anything that would change your mind.

The words to type.

I need to decide [decision] by [date]. Research [question]. Use sources from the last two years where you can, and give me a link and a date for every fact. Separate what the sources agree on from where they disagree. Tell me which sources are closest to the original, such as a law, a company filing or a government data table, and list anything you could not find. Keep it to one page, with the links at the end.

What comes back. A one-page brief with links, the points of agreement and disagreement, and a list of gaps. The list of gaps is often the most useful part, because it tells you where to call a person.

What to check. Pick the two or three facts your decision depends on. Open those links yourself, find the sentence that supports each fact, and check the date. If a fact appears in only one source, or the source is a blog quoting someone else, treat it as a lead until you find the original.

Push it further. Ask: Now argue the other side. What would a careful person who disagrees with this brief point to, and how strong is that case?

Build it once

Many research questions come back every week: new rules in your field, prices from your main competitors, job postings for the role you want, news about your biggest customers. Instead of asking each time, set up a standing brief. An automation runs the same research request every Monday morning and saves the results, with links, to a running document or a row in a sheet. Add a short list of sources you trust, and tell the tool to start there.

Your job each week is to read the brief, open the one or two links that matter and decide what to do. The searching and reading happen while you sleep. A person looking for work can run the same setup on postings that match their skills, including roles outside their old job title, with a column for which ones to apply to. The tool finds and sorts the postings, and you decide which ones are worth your time.

Make it yours

Reporter. Let the AI assistant search public records, summarize a long budget document and list every claim a city official made at last night's meeting. Before anything is published, confirm each fact you will print against the record itself, and call the people

involved. The AI assistant finds the story faster, and the reporter still stands behind every line.

Paralegal. Use the legal research tool your firm has approved to pull the cases and statutes on an issue and summarize how courts have ruled. Read every case you plan to cite, in full, in the firm's tool, and confirm it is still good law. The summaries save hours of reading, and the citations are where your checking time goes.

Small business owner. Before signing with a new supplier, ask your AI assistant to gather their business license status, complaint history, online reviews, recent news and anything that suggests money trouble, with a link for each. Check the license yourself on your state's lookup site and call one of their current customers. The decision to sign is yours.

Someone looking for work. Before you search for the same job again, ask why your old job changed, because a role AI is taking over may disappear again soon after you land it. Then talk it through with your AI assistant. Tell it what you did, what you were good at and what you enjoyed, ask it to name the skills underneath, and ask which growing roles need that mix. Push back on its suggestions, and ask it to challenge yours. A conversation like this often turns up a role you never thought to search for. Once you have a target, ask for a one-page brief on each company before an interview, and confirm the facts you plan to mention.

Common mistakes

- Trusting a link without opening it. A real-looking link can point to a page that says something different, or to nothing at all.
- Asking a leading question, such as "Find evidence that this supplier is reliable." Ask for the evidence on both sides.
- Using old information on a topic that changes fast, such as prices, rules and job markets.
- Counting three websites as three sources when they all copied the same article.

- Forgetting where you found something, so you cannot check it later or show someone else.
- Pasting private customer, patient or employer information into a public research tool.

The Decision Line for this skill

AI can search, read and summarize far more than any person; what you conclude and what you act on stay with you, and you should be able to name the source behind every fact you repeat.

Ask how to get better

After a research task, ask your AI assistant: "What question should I have asked first, and which sources would an expert in this field trust most for this kind of question?"

How it expands your reach

Every workplace has someone people go to when they need an answer they can trust. With AI tools doing the searching and reading, that person can now answer far more questions, faster, with sources attached, and becomes the one the team relies on before any big decision. Beyond your current job, research skill is the bridge to the legal researcher role described in the chapter on law, finance and insurance, and to the background investigator work covered there. It also suits market research and competitive analysis, where companies pay people to tell them what customers and competitors are doing, and the work of a librarian or school AI guide helps others learn to research well. The part of the book called *At the Wall* shows how to use this skill to find and land the next job.

Behind this chapter

This chapter draws on how professional researchers, reporters and librarians check sources, applied to the research modes now built into the major AI assistants. No outside figures are cited.

Sources

- PetaPixel, *AI-generated image of Pentagon explosion caused markets to dip* (May 22, 2023): <https://petapixel.com/2023/05/22/ai-generated-image-of-pentagon-explosion-caused-markets-to-dip/>
- Snopes, *fact check on the claim that UNESCO named a national anthem the best in the world*: <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/unesco-india-national-anthem/> (The toolbox chapter carries the current list of AI research tools.)

Building Products and Services

Every workplace runs on workarounds. There is the spreadsheet only one person understands, the paper form someone retypes every Friday, the same email sent forty times a month, and the sticky note on a monitor that holds a process together. For years, fixing any of these meant asking the IT department, waiting months and usually hearing no. So people kept working around them.

That has changed. Today you can describe a tool in plain words and an AI assistant will help you build it: a form that feeds a sheet, a calculator on a website, a simple app on your phone, or an automation that sends the reminder nobody remembers to send. You do not need to know how to code. You need to know the problem well, and the people closest to the work know it best.

The same shift works outside the office. The skills you have built over years, whether that is bookkeeping, tutoring, repairs or event planning, can be packaged into a service with a booking page, a price list and automatic reminders, run by one person with AI handling the busywork. This chapter covers both: building tools that make work easier, and building something people will pay for.

Who uses this skill

Anyone with a task that is repetitive, slow, labor-intensive or more complicated than it needs to be, and who wants to make it simpler. Office staff build request trackers and approval forms. Teachers build reading logs that families can fill in from a phone. Tradespeople put a quote calculator on their website. Nurses and caseworkers suggest tools to their employers and help test them. And people between jobs, or looking for a second income, turn a skill they already have into a small business.

The moves

- Start with one real problem for one kind of person, and write it in a sentence.
- Build the smallest version that works, using tools you already have, such as a form, a spreadsheet and your AI assistant.
- Test it with the people who will use it, including one unusual case.
- Decide who can see the data, who fixes it when it breaks and what happens on the day it is down.
- Improve it from what users tell you, and stop adding features once it does the job.

Try it yourself

The situation. There is a task you or your coworkers repeat every week by hand, such as collecting requests, tracking who has done what or answering the same question.

What you need. A short description of how the task works today, and access to the tools your employer allows, or your own accounts if the tool is for your own business.

What you know going in. Who does the task, how often, where it goes wrong and what information it touches, especially anything private.

The words to type.

I want to build a simple tool for [who] to [do what]. Today we do it by [how], and the problem is [what goes wrong]. It must [list the two or three must-haves]. It must not [store private information, or go outside the tools we are allowed to use]. Before you start, ask me any questions you have. Then suggest the simplest way to build it with tools I already have, and walk me through building the first version one step at a time.

What comes back. Questions first, then a plan, then steps you can follow. In many cases the answer is a form, a sheet and one automation, which you can build in an afternoon.

What to check. Run five real cases through it, including one odd one, before anyone relies on it. Confirm who can see what goes in, and get your manager's agreement before a work tool goes live. Write a one-page note on how it works, so it does not become the next spreadsheet only one person understands.

Push it further. Ask: Now imagine ten people use this every day for a month. What is most likely to go wrong, how would I find out, and what is the simplest way to prevent it?

Build it once

Here is what a small service business looks like once the pieces are connected. A woman who cleaned offices for years starts her own home cleaning service. A booking page on her website asks for the size of the home, the services wanted and a preferred day. A simple calculator she built with her AI assistant turns those answers into a price from her own rates, and she approves every quote with one tap. Once a customer books, the job lands on her calendar, the customer gets a reminder the day before, and after the visit a short message asks for a review. At the end of each month, her AI assistant totals her income and mileage for her bookkeeper.

She had never built an app, and she did not need to. She asked her AI assistant to teach her one piece at a time, using tools she already had: a free online form, a spreadsheet and the calendar on her phone. It walked her through each step, she asked questions whenever she got stuck, and she built the whole thing in pieces, one weekend at a time, starting with the booking form. She runs the cleaning, sets the prices and handles every complaint herself. The paperwork that would have needed an office manager runs on its own.

Make it yours

Office worker. Replace the expense or supply requests that arrive by email with a short form that feeds a sheet, flags anything over the approval limit and sends the requester an update when it is

approved. Show your manager the first version before you tell the whole office.

Teacher. Build a reading log families can fill in from a phone, with a weekly summary for you and a reminder to families who have not logged in a while. Use only the tools your school has approved, and leave student names out of anything else.

Electrician or plumber. Put a simple quote calculator on your website for your most common jobs, using your own prices, with a note that the final price is set after a visit. Let it book the visit straight onto your calendar.

Someone between jobs. Turn a skill you already have, such as bookkeeping, tutoring or small repairs, into a service with three packages, a booking page and automatic reminders. Ask your AI assistant to help you price it from your real hours, then test it with two or three customers before you spend money on advertising.

Common mistakes

- Building before talking to the people who will use the tool.
- Building too much. The first version should do only one thing and it should do it very well.
- Putting work or customer data into a personal account or an unapproved tool.
- Leaving no notes, so nobody else can fix the tool when you are out.
- Forgetting that every tool needs someone to look after it once it is live.
- Spending on advertising before a few real customers have tried the service.

The Decision Line for this skill

AI can write the code and connect the pieces; what the tool is allowed to do, whose information it touches and whether it is ready for people to rely on to stay with you, within your employer's rules.

Ask how to get better

After a build, ask your AI assistant: "What is the simplest version of this I could have built, and what should I learn so I can fix it myself when it breaks?"

How it expands your reach

The person who builds the tool everyone uses quickly becomes the person the team relies on, and often the one asked to take charge of how the team uses AI. The chapter on business and office work describes this as becoming the office's AI person. Inside larger employers, this skill leads toward automation, operations and product roles, where the job is deciding what to build, for whom, and how to know it works. Outside them, it is the bridge to the trade business of one described in the chapter on construction and the skilled trades, to the independent creator described in the chapter on arts, media and entertainment, and to the earning-while-learning paths in At the Wall.

Behind this chapter

The cleaning business is an illustrative example, built from how small service businesses commonly use booking forms, calendars and reminders. The approach in this chapter, which is to start with one person's problem, build the smallest version and learn from real users, is standard product practice. No outside figures are cited.

Sources

- *No outside figures or studies are cited in this chapter. The toolbox chapter carries the current list of form, automation and app-building tools.*

Communicating and Persuading

The short version. The website and the paid book carry more roles.

Every job runs on messages. The email to a customer who is upset, the two-minute update for a boss who is running between meetings, the note home in a family's language, the case for a raise or a new idea. Most of us were never trained to write any of them. We learned by getting a few wrong.

AI writes a good first draft of almost any message, in plain words and in dozens of languages. What it cannot know on its own is the person on the other end: what they already think, what they are worried about and what you are able to promise them. You bring that part. Put the two together and a message that used to take an hour of rewriting takes ten minutes, and it lands better.

The moves

- Decide the one thing you want the reader to know or do after reading.
- Picture the reader: what they care about, what they will push back on, and how much time they will give you.
- Draft long, then cut until every line earns its place.
- Say it at the reader's level and in the reader's language.
- Test it before it goes out by asking your AI assistant to read it as that reader would.

Try it yourself

The situation. You have to send a message that matters to someone who may not like it: a price increase for a long-time customer, a schedule change for your team, or a request to your manager.

What you need. Your rough notes on what you want to say.

What you know going in. Who the reader is, what they care about most, what they are likely to push back on and what you can and cannot offer them.

The words to type.

I need to tell [who] about [what]. Here are my rough notes: [paste]. They care most about [what], and they may push back on [what]. Write a short message in plain words that says what is changing, why, and what they can do next. Then read it the way [who] would, tell me the two lines most likely to upset them, and suggest a better way to say each one.

What comes back. A draft, and a review of it from the reader's side of the table. The review is often worth more than the draft, because it shows you the sentence you were too close to see.

What to check. Every fact, date, price and promise. If the AI assistant added something you cannot back up, such as a discount or a deadline, take it out. Then read the message out loud. If it does not sound like you, change the words until it does, because the reader knows how you talk.

Push it further. Ask for a three-sentence version you can say on the phone, and the three questions the reader is most likely to ask, with a short answer to each.

Build it once

Keep a folder of your best messages: the reply that calmed an angry customer, the update your boss forwarded to her boss, the note a family thanked you for. Add a few of them to your AI assistant's setup, and new drafts will start sounding like your best days.

If you write the same kinds of messages for other people, connect the pieces. A short form where coworkers ask for a message (who it goes to, what it is about and when it is due) feeds a sheet. Your AI assistant drafts each request in your style and leaves it in your

inbox. You read, fix and send. Nothing goes out until a person sends it.

Make it yours

Restaurant shift lead. Ask for next week's schedule change as a short text to the crew in English and Spanish, with the reason in one line and who to call about a swap. Read both versions, and ask a bilingual coworker to check the Spanish the first few times.

Bank teller. Ask how to tell an older customer, kindly and without embarrassing them, that the person on the phone asking for a wire transfer may be a scammer, with three short things you can say and one question that helps the customer see it for themselves. The judgment about whether to slow the transaction, and when to bring in a manager, stays with you.

The Decision Line

AI can draft the message and test it; what you promise, and whether it goes out under your name, is your call.

Where to go next

The setup chapter matters most for this skill, because an AI assistant that knows how you write and who you write to needs far less fixing. More role versions are on the field pages at thinkmorphic.com/fields, and the paid book carries the full chapter.

Sources

- U.S. General Services Administration, Federal plain language guidelines (background on writing in plain words):
<https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/>

Planning and Coordinating

The short version. The website and the paid book carry more roles.

Every job has a calendar that is too full and a list of things that cannot start until something else is done. Dispatchers live in it, and so do event planners, foremen, office managers, charge nurses and any parent juggling three kids' schedules. The work is less about any single task and more about keeping all of them in the right order while the world keeps changing them.

AI is good at the bookkeeping side of planning. It can hold a hundred details without dropping one, work back from a deadline, spot two things booked into the same slot and keep the list current when something moves. People still decide what matters most, and what gives when the plan breaks.

The moves

- Start from the date that cannot move and work backward.
- Write down what depends on what, because that is where plans fail.
- Give every step one owner and one date.
- Name the steps most likely to slip, and decide now what you would do if they do.
- Keep a version of the plan you could run on paper if the tools were down. The chapter on testing, checking and reviewing calls this the Paper Test.

Try it yourself

The situation. Something has to happen by a date: a move, an event, a remodel, a busy season or the first day of school.

What you need. A rough list of what has to get done, and who is involved.

What you know going in. The date, the budget if there is one, which people are available when, and anything that has gone wrong the last time you did this.

The words to type.

I need to [goal] by [date]. Here is what I know needs to happen: [list]. Here is who is involved and when they are free: [list]. Build a plan working back from the date, with each step, who owns it, when it must start and finish, and what it depends on. Mark the three steps most likely to slip and what I could do if each one does. Then put each deadline on my calendar with a reminder three days before.

What comes back. A table of steps in order, the risks, and reminders on your calendar if your AI assistant is connected to it. If it is not, add the reminders yourself from the table.

What to check. Every date against your own calendar, every step the AI assistant added that you did not list, and whether the people it named have agreed to their part. A plan that assigns work to someone who never said yes is a wish list.

Push it further. Ask for a one-page summary you can send to everyone involved, and a short checklist for each Monday until the date.

Build it once

Put the plan in a shared sheet, one row per step. Add a short form people can use to mark a step done or say it is running late, and have it feed the same sheet. Every Monday morning, an automation asks your AI assistant to read the sheet, list anything late or at risk, and draft a short nudge to each owner for you to approve. You stop chasing people for updates, and you spend the time on the steps in trouble.

Start with your own day. Make it a habit to have your AI assistant build your schedule for you: a short message every morning with the day's meetings, the tasks due and the one thing that matters most, or a Monday note with the week laid out. Anything that can be handed to AI should be, so your attention goes to the work only you can do.

For the first few weeks, check what it sends you. Is anything missing? Is a date wrong? Did it leave out the call you promised a customer? Like any new appliance, it needs some attention up front to get it right. When I bought my first robot vacuum, I walked behind it around the house to make sure it found every room and cleaned every corner. Today I press one button and leave. AI works the same way. Teach it your calendar, your lists and what matters to you, fix what it gets wrong, and as it gets better at managing things, you can rely on it more and check it less.

Keep the human part human. Planning and coordinating is about people: who needs a call before the change lands, who is stretched thin this week, and who will go the extra mile because you showed up for them last time. Let AI take the mundane work of lists, reminders and status checks, and use the time you save to build those relationships. If all you do is forward what the AI produces, the business will soon wonder why it needs you.

Make it yours

Hotel event coordinator. Ask for a run of show for a wedding or a conference, working back from the event date: when menus lock, when the room is set, when each vendor arrives and when final head counts are due, with the reminders on your calendar. Walk the room and check the times with the kitchen before you share it.

Family caregiver. Ask for a month of a parent's appointments, prescription refills and rides, split fairly among the siblings who can help, with a short message for each sibling and the dates on everyone's calendar. Who does what is a family conversation; the plan just gives everyone the same page to start from.

The Decision Line

AI can build the plan and watch it; what gets cut when time runs short, and who gets asked to do more, stays with you.

Where to go next

The skill chapter on organizing information and data shows how to keep the sheet behind a plan clean enough for AI to read. The chapter on testing, checking and reviewing covers the Paper Test in full. More role versions are on the field pages at thinkmorphic.com/fields, and the paid book carries the full chapter.

Sources

- *No outside figures or studies are cited in this chapter.*

Learning and Teaching

The short version. The website and the paid book carry more roles.

Everyone reading this book has something new to learn, often faster than they would like: a new tool at work, a license exam, a different job in the same company or a whole new field after a layoff. Many of us will also end up teaching what we know to the next person, whether that is a new hire, a coworker who is nervous about AI or our own kids.

AI is a patient tutor that is awake at two in the morning. It never minds the same question twice, it explains at any level you ask for, and it will quiz you until you get it right. It can also be confidently wrong, so the habit that matters most here is checking what it teaches you against a source you trust.

The moves

- Tell the AI assistant what you already know and what you need to be able to do, so it starts at the right place.
- Learn one piece at a time, with examples from your own work.
- Get quizzed. Pulling an answer out of your own memory teaches you more than reading the same page again.
- Explain it back in your own words and ask what you got wrong.
- Check against the manual, the textbook or the official exam guide.

Try it yourself

The situation. You need to learn something for a new task, a new tool or an exam, and you have a few weeks.

What you need. The official material if there is one, such as the manual, the exam outline or your company's training guide.

What you know going in. What you already understand, where you usually get stuck, how many hours a week you can study and the date you need to be ready.

The words to type.

I need to learn [topic] so I can [what you need to do] by [date]. I already know [what]. Using this material as the main source: [paste or attach], explain it to me in plain words, one piece at a time, with an example from [your job]. After each piece, ask me one question and wait for my answer before you go on. At the end, give me a ten-question quiz and a study plan that fits [hours] a week, with each study session on my calendar.

What comes back. A lesson that moves at your pace, questions along the way, a quiz and a plan.

What to check. Anything that will matter on the job or on the exam, against the official material. When an answer surprises you, ask the AI assistant where in the material it found it, then look there yourself.

Push it further. Say: Now I will explain this back to you as if you were a new coworker. Tell me what I got wrong or left out.

Build it once

Make a study folder with the official material and your notes. Once a week, an automation asks your AI assistant to turn that week's notes into a set of flash cards and a short quiz, and puts the next study session on your calendar. On a walk, use voice to have the AI assistant quiz you out loud.

The same tools work in the other direction. If you are the one teaching, talk through how you do the job while your AI assistant takes notes, then ask it to turn your words into a checklist, a one-page guide and a short quiz for the person you are training. What

took years to learn becomes something you can hand to someone in a week.

Make it yours

Medical assistant preparing for certification. Ask for a six-week plan built from the official exam outline, with practice questions in the same style and a weekly review of the topics you missed most. Check every clinical fact against your course material.

Retail store manager training a new hire. Describe opening and closing the store out loud, and ask for a step-by-step checklist, a one-page cheat sheet for the register and five questions to ask the new hire at the end of the first week. Walk the checklist with them on their first shift.

The Decision Line

AI can teach and quiz; whether you are ready, and whether someone you trained can do the work safely, is decided by people.

Where to go next

The skill chapter on investigating and researching shows how to find and check the sources you learn from. If you are learning a new field after losing work, the part of the book called At the Wall shows how to earn while you learn. More role versions are on the field pages at thinkmorphic.com/fields, and the paid book carries the full chapter.

Sources

- Henry L. Roediger III and Jeffrey D. Karpicke, Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention, *Psychological Science* (2006): <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01693.x>

PART FOUR

One Job in Depth

Deep Dive: The Customer Service Representative

Rosa has answered phones at the call center of a regional power and gas company for nine years. She knows the billing system better than some of the people who built it, she can calm a customer whose heat has been shut off in January, and she can tell within ten seconds whether a caller is confused, angry or scared.

Two years ago, the company added an AI assistant to its website and phone line. It now handles password resets, payment dates, outage updates and most "why is my bill higher this month" questions on its own. Rosa's call volume dropped by a third. The calls she still gets are the hard ones: the payment plan that fell apart, the elderly customer who does not trust the website, the small business owner who was billed twice and wants to cancel everything.

Last month, her supervisor asked whether she would spend part of each week reviewing what the AI assistant told customers and writing corrections where it got things wrong. Rosa said yes. It was the first time in nine years anyone had asked her to teach a system instead of following one.

This deep dive is for everyone in Rosa's seat: call center agents, customer support and help desk staff, chat and email support, front desk and patient services representatives, and anyone whose job is to solve other people's problems one conversation at a time.

The job, and what AI is changing

About 2.7 million Americans work as customer service representatives. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that number will fall 5% from 2025 to 2035, about 141,800 jobs, as more tasks are automated and customers use self-service apps instead of

calling. The same projections still expect about 289,500 openings a year, mostly to replace people who move on or retire. The job is shrinking, and it is still one of the largest in the country.

What employers are doing with the people who stay tells you where the job is heading. When Gartner surveyed 321 customer service leaders in late 2025, 85% said they were adding new responsibilities to frontline roles, and 75% said they were moving agents into entirely new roles. Most were cutting headcount slowly, through people leaving, and 31% said they planned layoffs driven by AI through early 2027.

There is also good evidence that AI helps the people in these seats. A study by researchers from Stanford and MIT, published through the National Bureau of Economic Research, followed 5,179 customer support agents who were given an AI assistant. On average, they resolved 14% more issues per hour, and newer and less experienced agents improved by 34%. Customers were also happier, and more agents stayed in the job. The most experienced agents saw little change, which makes sense: the tool was passing along what the best agents already knew.

Put those three facts side by side, and the picture is clear enough to act on. The simple calls are going to machines. The hard calls, the upset customers and the work of teaching and checking the machines are staying with people, and the agents who use AI well are handling more of them, better.

Where the time goes

Most customer service days are spent across the same handful of tasks:

- Answering questions about bills, orders, accounts, appointments and policies.
- Looking things up across several systems while the customer waits.
- Writing notes after every call or chat.
- Calming people down and getting to what they need.

- Following up by email or text on what was promised.
- Escalating what you cannot fix, and explaining it twice.
- Learning new policies, products and scripts, often with little training time.

AI already handles much of the answering, looking up, note-writing and follow-up, and it can help you learn new policies faster. Calming people down, handling what has to be escalated, and the judgment inside every one of these tasks are where your value now sits.

What is going away, plainly

Routine questions with a clear answer, such as balances, order status, password resets, store hours and simple changes, are moving to chatbots, voice assistants and self-service apps, and they will keep moving. Scripted outbound calling is declining fast too; telemarketers are among the fastest-declining jobs in the government's projections. If most of your day is those calls, the work around you is going to shrink, and the time to learn the rest of the job is now, while you still have the job.

Your toolbox for this job

The toolbox chapter covered twelve kinds of AI tools. These are the ones a customer service representative will use most:

- An AI assistant (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot) on your phone, for practice, drafting and learning.
- A study partner such as NotebookLM, loaded with policy documents, product guides and the knowledge base, so you can ask questions across all of them at once.
- The AI features inside your company's own help desk or contact center software, which many employers have already turned on.
- Spreadsheet analysis, to look at what customers call about and spot patterns.
- Voice mode, to rehearse hard calls out loud.

Customer information belongs only in the tools your employer has approved. Card numbers in particular are covered by strict payment card rules. The requests below either use made-up details or assume an approved tool, with names and account numbers removed.

Try it yourself: turn a confusing policy into answers you can trust

The situation. The company has changed its refund policy again. The new document is eleven pages long, written by the legal team, and you need to answer customers about it starting Monday.

What you need. The policy document, and a study partner tool or an approved AI assistant that can read files.

What you know going in. AI reads long documents quickly and explains them well. Asking it to point every answer back to its page and section makes each answer quick to confirm, including the exceptions that matter a great deal to one customer.

The words to type:

Here is our new refund policy. I answer customer calls about it. First, list the ten questions customers are most likely to ask, with a short plain-English answer to each and the page and section it comes from. Then list every exception, deadline and condition in the policy that could change an answer. If anything in the policy is unclear or seems to contradict itself, list it separately so I can ask my supervisor. Then turn the top ten into a one-page cheat sheet I can keep beside my screen.

What comes back. A set of questions and answers in plain words, a list of exceptions and deadlines, and a short list of unclear points.

What to check. Open the policy at every page it cites and read the original sentence. Make sure no exception was dropped. Take the unclear points to your supervisor before Monday; those questions often turn up a mistake in the policy itself, and catching it gets you noticed.

Push it further. "Now quiz me. Ask me ten customer questions one at a time, wait for my answer, and tell me what I got wrong and where the policy says so."

Try it yourself: rehearse the hard call

The situation. You dread a certain kind of call: the customer who has called four times about the same problem and starts the call shouting.

What you need. An AI assistant with a voice mode, and ten quiet minutes.

What you know going in. Practice with a partner who plays the customer, and AI is a partner that is available any time and never gets tired. It will not feel exactly like a live call, and it does not need to.

The words to type, or say:

Play a customer who was double-billed for internet service, has called four times, and is angry and ready to cancel. Stay in character, push back if I sound scripted, and calm down only if I earn it. After five minutes, step out of character and tell me what I did well, where I lost you, and two sentences I could use next time.

What comes back. A realistic, frustrated customer, then frank feedback and suggested wording.

What to check. Make sure any wording it suggests matches what you are allowed to promise. Rehearsal is a place to practice tone; your company's policy decides the offer.

Push it further. Try the same call with a customer who is quiet and scared instead of loud, an older customer who does not trust technology, or a customer whose first language is not English.

Try it yourself: write the reply that keeps the customer

The situation. A small business owner has emailed a long, angry message about a billing mistake that cost them a late fee with their

own supplier. You need to reply today, and you want to keep the account.

What you need. The customer's message with names and account numbers removed, the facts of what went wrong, and what your company allows you to offer.

What you know going in. AI writes calm, clear replies quickly. Telling it exactly what you can and cannot offer keeps every promise inside your company's rules and keeps the reply sounding like you.

The words to type:

Here is a customer's email, with names and account numbers removed. What happened: we charged them twice in September because of a system error, and the second charge caused them a late fee with their own supplier. What I can offer: a refund of the second charge within three business days and a \$50 account credit. I cannot pay their supplier's late fee. Draft a reply that apologizes once, explains what happened in two sentences, says exactly what we will do and by when, and says plainly what we cannot do. Keep it under 150 words and make it sound like a person wrote it. Then write a two-line note for the account about what we promised, and add a reminder to my calendar for three business days from now to confirm the refund went through.

What comes back. A short, direct reply with a single apology and clear next steps.

What to check. Every number, date and promise against what you are allowed to offer. Read it once as the customer would. Remove any phrase that sounds like a form letter.

Push it further. "Give me a shorter version I could read out on the phone." Then ask, "What is this customer most likely to say next, and how should I answer?"

Try it yourself: find what customers keep calling about

The situation. Your team handles the same few problems over and over, and nobody above you seems to see it.

What you need. A week or a month of call reasons or ticket summaries, exported from your system with every name and account number removed, or your own tally if you cannot export. A spreadsheet.

What you know going in. Spreadsheet analysis tools count and group hundreds of rows in seconds. Where your team's notes are short or vague, tell the tool how your team labels calls, and it will group them the way you would.

The words to type:

Here is a spreadsheet of last month's call reasons, with no customer details. Group them into the ten most common reasons, count each one, and show the top ten in a simple chart. Then suggest, for each of the top three, one change the company could make so fewer customers need to call about it. Label any suggestion that is a guess. Then draft a one-page note to my supervisor with the top three reasons, how many calls each one costs a month and one fix for each.

What comes back. Counts, a chart and suggested fixes.

What to check. Spot-check twenty rows to make sure the grouping makes sense. Check the counts add up to the total number of calls. Treat the suggested fixes as ideas to discuss, since you know things about the process the tool does not.

Push it further. Ask it to run the same count every month, so you can show whether the fixes worked. Agents who bring this kind of page to a meeting are the ones who get asked to help change the process.

Try it yourself: help train the AI

The situation. Your company's AI assistant answers most customer questions before they reach you. When a customer still calls, it is

usually because the question needed a detail the AI assistant had not been given yet.

What you need. A few examples of what the AI assistant told customers, with personal details removed, and the correct answers from policy. Your supervisor's OK, if this is part of your role.

What you know going in. AI assistants get better every time someone who knows the work writes down what was missing and what the right answer is. The people best placed to do that are the agents who take the calls the AI assistant passes on.

The words to type:

I review answers our customer chatbot gave. For each example below, I will paste the customer's question, the chatbot's answer and the correct answer from our policy. For each one, tell me in one line what was missing (a fact, an exception, the right tone, or a hand-off to a person), and draft a short note in the format: question, answer given, right answer, policy reference. At the end, list any pattern you see across the examples. Then put the notes in a table our AI team can load, and add a reminder to my calendar for Friday to send it.

What comes back. A clean log of gaps and right answers, the patterns behind them, and a table ready to send.

What to check. That every "right answer" matches the current policy, and that the patterns are supported by the examples. Your company's AI team will use these notes, so accuracy matters more than volume.

Push it further. Ask for a list of the questions the chatbot should always hand to a person, such as complaints, cancellations and anyone who sounds distressed, and share it with your supervisor. Many companies now have roles built around exactly this work.

Your starter profile

Paste this into your AI assistant's setup, as the setup chapter describes, and change the brackets to fit your job.

About me: I work as a customer service representative at [the kind of company, such as a utility, an online store or a clinic]. My day is mostly answering calls and chats about [bills, orders, appointments or accounts], writing notes and following up by email. I usually write for customers who may be frustrated or confused.

How I want answers: Short, warm and plain, in American English. Give me wording I can say on a call or paste into an email.

Before you start: If my request is unclear, ask me one question first.

Accuracy: Never invent a policy, a price, a date or a promise. If you are not sure what our company allows, say so and tell me to check.

Push back: If my reply sounds scripted, cold or promises more than I said I can offer, tell me.

Privacy: I will not share customer names, account numbers or card details with you.

Growing in the job you have

For most people in customer service, the next step is inside the building, and it goes to the agents who use the new tools well. Three roles show up again and again:

- **The escalation specialist**, who takes the calls nobody else can solve and keeps the customers the business cannot afford to lose.
- **The knowledge owner**, who keeps the policy answers, the help articles and the AI assistant's answers accurate, using the skills in the first and last Try it yourself sections above.
- **The quality coach or team lead**, who reviews calls, coaches newer agents and shows them how to use AI on the job.

Ask your supervisor which of these your team needs most. Then do a small version of it for a month, write down what changed, and bring the page to your next review.

More Try it yourself items for this role, and where this work can lead beyond your team, are on the book's website and in the full edition.

The Decision Line in customer service

AI can answer the simple questions, look things up, draft the reply and suggest the offer. The promise stays with you: the refund, the exception, the credit, the date you commit to, and the decision that this customer needs a supervisor, a payment plan or a phone call back tomorrow. So does noticing when a customer is in serious trouble, such as a family about to lose heat or an older caller being pressured by someone in the room. That judgment is the reason the hardest calls still come to people.

Behind this chapter

Rosa is a composite. The employment figures come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook and its 2025 to 2035 projections. The figures on service leaders come from Gartner's April 2026 survey release. The productivity figures come from Brynjolfsson, Li and Raymond's study of 5,179 customer support agents, published by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Sources

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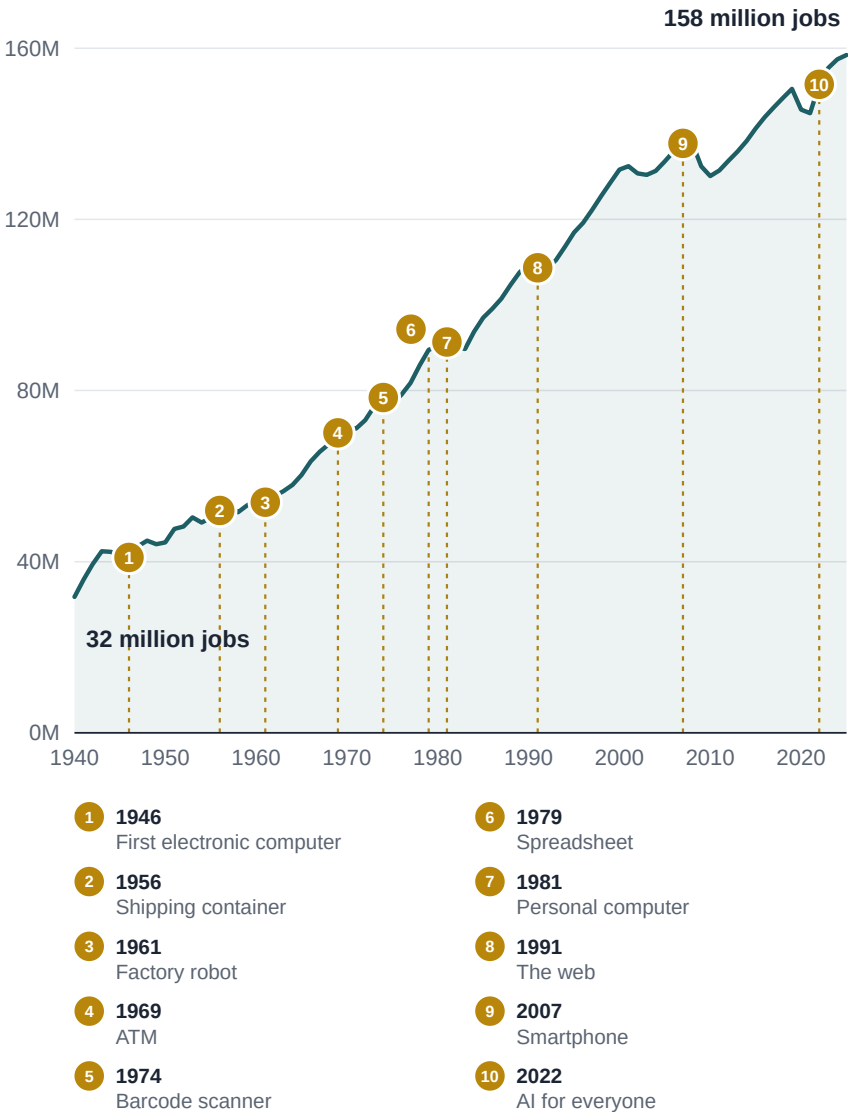
PART FIVE

Seeing What Comes Next

Every part of this book so far has been about the work in front of you: the tools, the setup, your field and the skills every job shares. This part steps back. It looks at how work has changed before, what keeps happening each time, and how to spot the new work AI is creating before everyone else does.

The Wall of Change

U.S. jobs from 1940 to 2025, with the technologies that changed how people work. A larger version is at thinkmorphic.com/wall.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, total nonfarm payroll employment, via FRED (series PAYEMS). Each year is the average of its January and July counts.

The picture that opens this chapter is a wall of change. The line climbing across it is the number of jobs in the United States, from about 32 million in 1940 to about 158 million in 2025. Along the bottom are the technologies that changed how people work: the first electronic computer, shipping containers, the factory robot, the ATM, the barcode scanner, the spreadsheet, the personal computer, the web, the smartphone and now AI. Every one of them was supposed to end work as people knew it. Every one of them did end some jobs. And the line kept climbing.

Two findings explain why. David Autor and his colleagues at MIT matched U.S. census job titles from 1940 to 2018 and estimated that about six in ten jobs Americans held in 2018 were in occupations that did not exist in 1940. And when economist James Bessen checked the 270 occupations listed in the 1950 census, he found only one that had since disappeared mainly because of automation: elevator operator. Most jobs changed in what people did all day, and the people in them carried the cost of that change.

Looking across the wall, the same five patterns keep showing up. Knowing them helps you place your own job.

The craft ends, the field grows

Sometimes a specific job does end, and the wider field it serves grows larger. The chapter on arts, media and entertainment tells the story of the theater orchestra pit, which went quiet when sound came to the movies, while film scores and sound design grew into whole careers. The blacksmith who stayed in business in the 1930s did it by straightening car axles and welding frames. If your exact task is going away, look at the field around it. That is usually where the growth is.

Cheaper work brings more demand

When a tool makes something cheaper, people often want much more of it, and jobs can grow even as each one changes. In the 1800s, power looms took over about 98 percent of the labor needed to weave a yard of cloth, yet factory weaving jobs increased,

because cheaper cloth sold in far greater amounts. The radiology story in the chapter on health and care is the modern version. This pattern has limits. Bank tellers grew for decades alongside the ATM, and they are now shrinking as customers move to their phones, as the chapter on law, finance and insurance shows. Cheaper work brings more demand until the work itself moves somewhere else.

Some make the leap, some never do

The change hits hardest the people already in the job. Between 1920 and 1940, the telephone company converted more than half its network to automatic dialing. Economists James Feigenbaum and Daniel Gross followed the young women who worked as operators, one of the most common jobs for young women at the time. Operators whose city converted were less likely to be operators ten years later, and those who were still working were more likely to be in lower-paying jobs. The next generation adjusted, finding work as secretaries and in restaurants. Many readers of this book are people already in the job, which is why it asks you to learn the tools now, while you still have one.

The terms decide who shares the gains

The technology arrives either way. Agreements on pay, credit and protection decide who benefits. In 1960, the West Coast longshore union signed an agreement letting employers bring in cargo containers and other labor-saving machines, and in return the registered dockworkers of the time got guaranteed work and a share of the gains. Workers outside that group were left unprotected. The 2023 Hollywood strikes over AI were the same fight in a new form. When your workplace brings in AI, the terms of how it is used are worth speaking up about, and the people who understand the tools are the ones listened to.

The wait can be long, and the cost lands on people

The gains from new technology can take decades to reach workers. In Britain in 1806, handloom weavers earned roughly twice what factory workers earned. By 1820 they earned less, and their wages kept falling for years, during a boom in the cotton industry. Hundreds of thousands stayed at the hand loom anyway. In the United States, 39 percent of Americans lived on farms in 1900 and about 1 percent by 2000, and most of that move happened within one generation after World War II. The country got richer. Many of the families who lived through it paid for that with years of hard change. Staying put while a trade collapses has always been the most expensive choice.

Happening now

AI was part of our lives long before it reached the headlines. Netflix used it to recommend what to watch next, and Amazon used it to suggest what to buy. We were happy to use it, and few of us gave much thought to the people whose work went away behind the scenes, like the video store clerk, the bookstore clerk and the travel agent. Then ChatGPT reached an estimated 100 million users within about two months of its launch, faster than any app before it, and within a year AI tools were drafting emails, writing code and answering customer questions in offices across the country. Now that our own jobs are on the line, many of us are waking up. None of this is said to blame anyone; it is how most of us are wired. We pay little attention to change until it reaches us, the same way people ignore rising water. When it is at your toes, or even your calves, you do not care. When it reaches your knees and thighs, you start to feel it, because you cannot move around freely. At chest height, people panic, and at nose height they know they are about to go under. Some readers of this book already have water over their heads. The water was easy to spot all along, and the people who noticed it early had time to learn to swim.

The right edge of the wall is where we stand. AI tools reached the public in late 2022, and within three years they were in offices

across America. Driverless trucks are hauling freight in Texas. Every pattern above is playing out again, at once, across every field in this book. The good news from the wall is that the line has always kept climbing. The hard news is that the climb was never easy for the people standing at the bottom of each change. The rest of this part is about where the new work is coming from, and the part after it is for anyone already standing at the wall.

The Motels Nobody Saw Coming

When people ask me whether AI will take all the jobs, I think about Henry Ford.

When Henry Ford started building cars with automation, people thought the world would collapse because there would not be enough people to buy cars. The folks who were building cars did not know they were creating a new economy and industries that had never existed: oil and gas, roadways, motels, vacations, renewed real estate, suburbs and a lot more that did not exist in the 1900s.

The motel is my favorite example. Nobody building Model Ts in 1908 was thinking about a place for families to sleep on a road trip, because there were no road trips. Within twenty years there were enough cars and enough roads that the first motels opened along the highways, and a whole industry followed, with its own jobs, its own owners and its own way of life.

What we are seeing today is the future world through the eyes of today's world. We need to think differently and act differently. In 1908, the people best positioned to see the future coming were building carburetors. Today, the people best positioned to see what AI will create are the people using it every day in their own jobs. That can be you.

Where new work comes from

Looking at the wall and at what is happening now, new work tends to come from four places.

Running and checking the new tools. Every tool needs people to set it up, teach it, check it and keep it running. The office's AI person, the help desk lead who trains the chatbot and the reviewer who knows what a wrong answer looks like are the first new jobs in

almost every field. Most of them are being created within existing jobs, by the people who learn the tools first.

More of something people already want. When AI makes a service cheaper, more people can afford it. A tax preparer, a bookkeeper or a financial planner who can serve twice as many clients can reach people who could never afford one before. The same is true for tutoring, legal help and design for small businesses. This is the pattern from the wall, and the growth goes to the people who use the tools to serve more people well.

The physical world AI needs. AI runs on data centers, and data centers run on electricity, cooling and steel. The chapter on construction and the skilled trades shows how this is already creating work for electricians and builders. Driverless trucks need people to support them remotely and maintain them in the field. Every new machine needs someone to install it, fix it and keep it safe.

Things nobody has named yet. These are the motels. They come from what becomes possible once the new tools are everywhere, and almost nobody sees them coming. The first motel owners were people who noticed that families were driving farther and needed a place to stop.

A few scenarios worth watching

Here are the kinds of work I expect to grow. Some will come out of jobs that exist today, and some will be new.

The household AI manager. As homes fill with AI assistants handling bills, appointments, insurance and school schedules, families will want a trusted person to set it all up, check it and step in when something goes wrong. The same person will look after the AI needs of older parents and people who are sick at home, working alongside the caregivers who look after them in person.

The AI coach. When cars arrived, driving became something nearly everyone had to learn, and driving instructors followed. AI is heading the same way. People will start using AI and get lost, and

they will need coaches to show them how to get good results, how to get the most out of what they pay for, how to use it ethically and how to choose the right tools.

The fact checker. When anyone can make a convincing photo, voice or document, confirming what is real becomes work in itself. Insurance claims, hiring, news, online sales and family scams will all need people who can verify identity and evidence. The skill chapter on testing, checking and reviewing is the place to start.

The business and culture advisor. With AI translating conversations as they happen, language will stop being the barrier between a business in Ohio and a partner in South Korea, India or Brazil. Knowing how business works in another culture will still matter, and translators are well placed to become the advisors who teach it, often working remotely.

The collector and appraiser. Many of today's everyday things, from the cars we drive to the devices in our pockets, will one day be rare, the way stamps and coins became collectibles. AI will know them only from pictures and records. Someone will still have to look at them in person, confirm they are real and put a value on them.

The hands that stay human. I recently tried wrapping a car in vinyl, and it is far harder than it looks. Work like that, with skilled hands on a curved surface in a real garage, will stay with people for many years, until robots can do it well.

The AI farmer. Some people will run many accounts on the same AI model, ask thousands of questions side by side, work out what a new model can and cannot do, and sell what they learn to the companies building and buying AI, within the rules each AI company sets.

The AI search specialist. Today, businesses pay people to make sure search engines find them. Tomorrow, they will pay people to make their information ready for AI, so that when someone asks an AI assistant for a plumber, a product or a place to eat, their business shows up with accurate details.

The AI office manager. As companies put more AI agents to work, someone will need to keep track of them all: what each one is allowed to do, what it did today and whether any has gone off course.

AI policy and advocacy. Governments will need people who understand AI to write sensible rules, and companies, unions and community groups will need people to speak for them while those rules are made.

The remote operator. Robotaxis and driverless trucks already rely on people who step in from a distance when a vehicle meets something it cannot handle, and that work will grow as the fleets grow.

How to spot the next motel

Getting ahead of the future starts with noticing what is changing around you a little earlier than everyone else. A few habits help.

- Watch what gets cheaper. Whatever AI makes it cheaper, people will want more of it, and someone has to deliver it.
- Listen to what people complain about. Every new tool creates new frustrations, and every frustration is a job waiting for someone to fix it.
- Watch what newly needs trust. When something becomes easy to fake, checking it becomes valuable.
- Set up a standing research brief, as the skill chapter on investigating and researching shows, on the new jobs and businesses appearing in your field, and read it every Monday.
- Ask your AI assistant once a month: "Based on what is changing in [your field], what new kinds of work are likely to appear in the next five years, and which of my skills would carry over?"

We need to open our eyes to the new possibilities, because they are already taking shape around us. The wall of change has always had a way up. For some of us, the next step is to climb it within the job we have. For others, it is to go around it to something new, and the next part of this book is for you.

Behind this part

The job counts on the Wall of Change are U.S. total nonfarm payroll employment from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as published by FRED (series PAYEMS), with each year shown as the average of its January and July counts. The new-work finding is from Autor, Chin, Salomons and Seegmiller (2024), as summarized by MIT News. The elevator operator finding is from James Bessen, as summarized by the World Economic Forum. The power loom figure is from Bessen in the IMF's Finance and Development. The telephone operator study is by Feigenbaum and Gross, as summarized by the Cato Institute; it covers young, white, American-born women. The longshore agreement is from the LaborArts exhibit on the ILWU. The handloom weaver figures are from Acemoglu and Johnson, as summarized by the MIT Stone Center. The farm population figures are from the USDA Economic Research Service. The Henry Ford passage is Joe's own, from a public comment, lightly edited.

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PART SIX

At the Wall

At the Wall

This part is for anyone who is already standing at the wall: the job is gone, or the notice has come, or the hours have been cut so far that it might as well be gone. If that is you, I am sorry. Losing work you were good at, sometimes work you did for years, is one of the hardest things that can happen in a working life, and nothing in this book is meant to make it sound small.

It is also not the end of the road. The wall has two ways past it. You can climb it, by moving into the role next door that uses what you already know. Or you can go around it, by taking your skills somewhere new. Either way, the first few weeks are when you have the most time and the most help on offer, so that is where this part starts.

The first thirty days

The first weeks after a job ends are when you have the most time and, often, the most help on offer. Use them to line up support for learning AI, in this order.

Start with your employer. Many employers offer career transition help when they let people go. Ask what is available, and ask specifically for help learning AI: a course, a certificate program or a paid subscription to an AI assistant for the next few months. Some will say no. Some will say yes, and you only find out by asking, ideally before your last day.

Then see what the government offers. Apply for unemployment in your first week; your state's unemployment office, which CareerOneStop links to, can tell you what you qualify for. Every state also runs American Job Centers, which offer free career coaching and can often help pay for training through a federal program called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Ask whether they will fund a course in AI tools or in the field you want

to move into. Your public library may also give you free access to online learning with your library card.

Use what is free. Many AI assistants are free to use, including Claude, Gemini, ChatGPT and Grok. Pick one or two and use them to explore. Many of the companies behind AI offer free courses, including Google, Microsoft, OpenAI, Anthropic and NVIDIA, and they are especially a good place to start. Learning platforms such as Coursera offer many more that you can take for free or with financial aid. Every request in this book is free to try.

Buy only what you need, when you need it. If you find yourself using one AI assistant every day, a paid plan may be worth it. Wait until you know you will use it, and start with one.

Do not pay for promises, and watch for job scams. When you have just lost a job, you will see ads promising a new career, guaranteed income or a proven system if you buy a course or a program. For someone without a paycheck, promises like these are mostly a hook. If a program will not refund your money when it does not deliver what it promised, walk away. Fake job offers are another trap. The Federal Trade Commission reported that job scams cost people almost \$300 million in the first half of 2025 alone. A real employer never charges you to work for them, never sends you a check to deposit and pass along, and never asks for your Social Security number before a real offer. If something feels wrong, look up the company yourself and report it at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/ReportFraud).

And if the weight of it all becomes too much, call or text 988 in the United States, any time of day.

Time is the asset

Here is something nobody tells you on the day the job ends. For the first time in years, you have time. It does not feel like a gift, and the money worry makes it hard to use well. But time is the one thing a person with a full-time job never has enough of, and right now it is yours.

The worst use of it is doing the same thing in a slightly different way: sending the same résumé for the same job title, over and over, and waiting. The best use is to step back, look at the new tools you have, and reorganize. Give your weeks a shape. Spend mornings on the search, a few hours a week on learning, and some time on something that earns a little, which the rest of this part covers. Treat the search as a job with hours, and stop when the hours are done.

Be careful, too, with the jobs that are easiest to land. Work that is easy to learn is usually easy for AI to take over, and taking it can put you back on the same hamster wheel, waiting for the next round of cuts. Use this time to get off the wheel. Look for the niche where your knowledge, your judgment and your relationships count, the kind of work only someone with your background can do well, and build toward it.

Climb the wall: the role next door

Most people undersell themselves. Ask a server what she does, and she says she takes orders and carries plates. She also reads a table in seconds, remembers eight orders without writing them down and calms an angry customer without losing the table next to him. Those are skills with names, and other jobs pay for them.

Start by taking stock of an ordinary week at your old job. List every task, including the problems you solved that nobody asked you to solve and the things people came to you for. Then ask what skill each one takes. Most people end up with fifteen to twenty-five skills, and many of them are the kind AI finds hardest to do.

Then talk it through with your AI assistant. Before you search for the same job again, ask why your old job changed, because a role AI is taking over may disappear again soon after you land it. A conversation does better than a single question here, because a single question gets a narrow answer, and a conversation turns up options you would never have thought to search for.

Renee spent nine years processing insurance claims for a regional auto insurer. When the company brought in software that reads

claim forms and photos on its own, her team shrank, and she was let go. Her first instinct was to search for claims processor jobs. Instead, she opened her AI assistant and typed:

I processed auto insurance claims for nine years until my job was cut because software now does most of it. Ask me about my work one question at a time, and then tell me which skills I have that the software does not.

The questions came one by one. What did she do when a claim did not add up? Who called her when a customer was upset? What did she catch that new hires missed? Renee answered the way she would talk to a friend: she was the one who noticed when the damage in the photos did not match the story, she was the one the angry customers got transferred to, and she knew the policy language better than anyone on the floor. The AI assistant named the skills underneath: spotting inconsistencies, reading contracts closely, calming upset people and explaining hard decisions.

Then she asked which growing roles need that mix. It suggested fraud investigation, compliance review and customer experience roles that handle escalations. She pushed back. Fraud investigation sounded like police work, she said, and she had no training. The AI assistant explained that many insurers and banks hire investigators from claims and customer service, and that a certificate course could fill the gap. She asked it to challenge its own suggestions, and it pointed out that compliance roles often want a degree she did not have. That ruled one out. By the end of the evening she had a short list she had never thought to search for, and two jobs she wanted to apply to the next morning.

That is the climb. Renee kept all nine years of what she knew and found the role next door where they count for more.

Renee is a composite, built from how claims work is changing in the chapter on law, finance and insurance.

Go around it: a new path

Sometimes the role next door is shrinking too, and the better move is to go around the wall to something new. The chapters on each field in this book name the work that is growing, and some of it, like the trades, health care and the jobs that support AI itself, is hiring people with no background in it at all.

Before you commit, check three things. First, is the work growing where you live? CareerOneStop and your state's labor market office publish local projections and wages for most jobs. Second, what does it take to get in? Many paths start with a short certificate, an apprenticeship or a community college course, and American Job Centers can often help pay for training. Third, can you try it before you commit? A conversation with someone who does the job, a volunteer shift or a weekend course tells you more than a month of reading.

Your AI assistant can help with all three. It can find the local data, explain what a certificate covers, and draft the message asking someone in that field for twenty minutes of their time. It can also be your tutor while you learn, which the short skill chapter on learning and teaching describes. Going around the wall takes longer than climbing it, so plan for the time it needs, and keep some income coming in while you do.

Earn while you learn

The usual advice runs in a straight line: first learn a new skill, then earn from it. The trouble is the gap between the two. A certificate takes months, and the rent is due on the first.

That gap can be shorter now, because the same AI tools that teach you can also do work people pay for. They can draft a menu, cut a short video, design a flyer, write a product listing from a photo, translate a letter and handle the paperwork for a one-person business. What I am describing is a bridge income, a few hundred dollars a month that can buy the time to finish a course. It will not make anyone rich, and anyone promising riches is selling the scam.

One rule decides who gets paid. When a tool makes a task easy for everyone, the task gets cheap. Economists studying freelancers on Upwork after ChatGPT arrived found that writers saw fewer jobs and lower monthly earnings than freelancers in work AI touched less. If what you sell is exactly what the tool produces, the tool is your competitor. What sells is what you know, made faster by the tool. A cook knows what a kitchen manager needs on a prep list. A mechanic knows which noise is the belt. A local person is trusted by the bakery, the church and the auto shop down the street. Pair one of those with a tool, and you have something to sell.

A few starting ideas, built on that rule:

- A server can coach other hospitality workers on résumés and interviews, or make short videos for local restaurants.
- An administrative assistant can set up simple AI tools, templates and schedules for small offices that have nobody to do it.
- A cook can teach budget cooking classes, or make menus and food videos for food trucks.
- A nurse can help nursing assistant students prepare for their certification exam.
- A call center representative can handle customer emails and reviews for small businesses.
- A home health aide can work directly for families, with a simple booking page and reminders, the way the chapter on building products and services describes.

Freelancing is another bridge, and it covers more kinds of work than most people expect. Project managers, bookkeepers, writers, designers, analysts and administrative assistants all find short contracts on freelance platforms. General marketplaces such as Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer.com and Guru list work in almost every field. Toptal and Braintrust focus on experienced professionals and screen people before they can join. TaskRabbit connects people with local, hands-on jobs such as moving, furniture assembly and small repairs, and Mediabistro lists media and writing work. Ask your AI assistant which of your skills fit the categories on each site,

and have it help you write a profile you then put in your own words.

Go in with clear eyes. On the big platforms you compete with people all over the world, the easy work pays the least, and every platform takes a fee, so read the terms before you start. A real platform never asks you to pay to be offered a job.

Start the way this book always recommends: small, private and easy to stop. Do your first job for free for someone you know, do it well, and ask for an honest review and a referral. Charge for the second one, with a flat price for a clear result, and tell the customer you use AI tools and check the work yourself.

Three rules come with the money. First, it is income, and it is taxable whether or not anyone sends you a tax form; keep a simple record from the first dollar. Second, if you are receiving unemployment, you almost certainly have to report it, and states differ on how, so ask your state office before your first paid job. Third, avoid anyone who charges you hundreds or thousands of dollars to unlock income from AI. The Federal Trade Commission has shut down several schemes that promised exactly that. The tools are free or cheap, and so are the instructions.

Getting hired with AI on your side

Looking for a job has changed. Employers use AI to sort applications, and applicants use AI to write them, so the pile is far bigger on both sides. Anything that gets you out of the pile matters more than it used to.

Make your résumé easy for a machine to read. Most medium and large employers use software to collect and sort applications. Use a plain layout with clear headings and a common file type. Use the words in the job posting where they truthfully describe you, answer the screening questions carefully, and apply early.

Skip the tricks. Hidden keywords, hidden instructions to the AI and invented experience can all get an application rejected. Employers know candidates use AI, and many now add skills tests

and live interviews. Anything you claim, you should be able to do in front of someone.

Use AI where it helps. Let your AI assistant help you rebuild your résumé. Ask it to interview you about your work, one question at a time, so it draws out skills and results you might otherwise leave off. Ask it to sharpen how you describe your responsibilities, show you what each job posting is asking for, and tailor your résumé to match. Then use it to research the employer and, most of all, to rehearse. It can play the interviewer, ask the hard questions and give you feedback as many times as you like, in private.

Reach a person. When the pile is enormous, a referral or a conversation with someone who works there matters more than any formatting. Reach out to your network and ask for help without hesitating. There is no shame in asking, most people are glad to help someone they know, and asking costs you nothing. Your network is bigger than you think: former coworkers and supervisors, the people you trained, the regulars who liked you, and people from church, the gym or your children's school. Tell them specifically what you are looking for. "I'm looking for a fraud investigator job, and I know you know people at the insurers" works much better than "let me know if you hear of anything." Your AI assistant can draft those messages, and you should always rewrite them in your own voice before sending.

Stay in charge of your search. Do the job search yourself, and be wary of paying consultants or coaches to find you a job. If you do pay for help, do not rely on it alone. Stay in control and drive every conversation. When someone refers you for a job, follow up with the recruiter yourself or write to the hiring manager directly. When someone says they will help, follow up on that offer, politely and promptly.

Know your rights. The law on AI in hiring is new and depends on where you live. New York City requires bias audits for automated hiring tools and notice to candidates. California and Illinois have rules that cover AI in hiring decisions. Federal anti-discrimination laws still apply everywhere when an employer uses a machine, and

if you have a disability and an automated test puts you at a disadvantage, you can ask for an accommodation, such as a human review. It is fair to ask an employer whether AI screens applications and whether a person reviews the results.

The way past the wall

The people who get past the wall fastest protect themselves in the first month, use the time they suddenly have, name the skills they already own, and keep moving, a little every day, with a better tool in their hands. You can be one of them. Climb it, or go around it. Either way, there is a path to the other side.

Behind this part

Renee is a composite, built from how claims processing is changing, as described in the chapter on law, finance and insurance. Training support comes from the Department of Labor's American Job Centers and its Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program. The freelancer research is Hui, Reshef and Zhou in Organization Science. The hiring rules come from New York, California and Illinois law, as summarized in the sources below.

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Keep Climbing

You have reached the end of this book, which means you are at the start of the work.

If you take one habit away, make it this one: once a week, try one new thing with your AI assistant using your own work. Ask it to sort something you usually sort by hand, draft something you usually dread writing, or teach you something you have been meaning to learn. Check what comes back, keep what works, and add a line to your setup when it gets something wrong twice. A year of small weekly steps adds up to more than any course.

The tools will keep changing. Some names in this book will have new names by the time you read it, and some will be gone. What carries over is the way of working: tell the tool who you are, ask clearly, check what matters, and keep the decisions that carry your name. Those habits work with whatever tool comes next. The website keeps a current list of tools and links, so you never have to guess what replaced what.

Please share what you learn. Show one person at work or at home how you used AI to save an hour, and help them try it on their own work. Most people who are wary of AI have simply never had someone show them where to start, and you now know more than enough to show them.

Share your own use case

The best examples for the next reader will come from people like you. If you used something in this book in your own job, I would love to hear about it. Write to me at joe@thinkmorphic.com and tell me:

- your job, in general terms, such as "school bus dispatcher" or "dental office manager"

- what you asked your AI assistant to do
- what came back, and what you had to check or fix
- what it saved you, in time or in stress

Please send text only, with no attachments, and leave out names, account numbers and anything private about you, your customers or your employer. With your permission, and after I review it, your use case may appear on the website so others can learn from it.

A last word

When I started writing this book, I pictured the people who had written to me after my comment on LinkedIn, worried about what AI would do to their work and their families. I wrote it for them, and for you.

I do not know what your wall looks like. It might be a job that is changing faster than you can keep up with, a job that is already gone, or just a feeling that the world is moving and you are standing still. Whatever it is, you are not standing still anymore, because you picked up this book and read it to the end.

Climb it, or go around it. Either way, keep moving, and keep climbing.

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Starter Requests in One Place

Here are the main requests from the book, gathered in one place so you can find them again. Swap the parts in brackets for your own details, leave out anything private, and check what comes back. Each chapter explains what to check for its request.

Never Used AI? Start Here

I have never used AI before. I work as [your job]. Teach me how to use you, one small step at a time, and give me one thing to try today that would help with my work.

Construction and the Skilled Trades

I'm a plumber. Here is my price list for common jobs: [paste]. Here is a voice note transcript from a job I just looked at: [paste]. Turn it into an itemized quote in this format: [describe or paste one of your past quotes]. Use only prices from my list. If something in the note is not on my list, flag it and leave the price blank. Ask me any questions before you write it.

Health and Care

Here is [insurer]'s published prior authorization policy for [an MRI of the knee]. Turn it into a one-page checklist for our front desk: what the insurer requires, which documents to attach, and the most common reasons a request gets sent back. Quote the policy for each item so I can check it. Then turn the checklist into a one-page form the front desk can fill in for each request, and add a reminder to my calendar to check the insurer's policy page for changes at the start of each quarter.

Public Service and Safety

Here is a letter I received from [the agency], with my personal numbers removed. Explain in plain words what it is asking me to do. List every document I need and every deadline in it. Draft a short reply I can send. Then put each deadline on my calendar, with a reminder two weeks before.

Law, Finance and Insurance

Here is my [homeowners] insurance policy, with the policy number removed. Explain in plain words what it covers for water damage and what it excludes, with the page number for each point. Then make a checklist of what I would need to file a water damage claim, and add a reminder to my calendar a month before the policy renews so I can review the coverage.

Arts, Media and Entertainment

Here are descriptions of ten pieces of my past work, with what I charged and roughly how long each took. Write a short, plain description of what I do for a one-page portfolio. Suggest three packages with prices based on my real hours and rates. Draft a short email offering those packages to small local businesses. Then put a reminder on my calendar to follow up with each one a week after I send it.

Food, Hospitality and Travel

Here is my recipe for [dish], which serves four, and my grocery receipt from this week. Scale the recipe to forty portions. Work out the cost per portion from the prices on my receipt. List every common allergen in it. Build a prep timeline that works backward from a 6 p.m. service. Then put reminders on my calendar for each prep step the day I make it.

Transportation and Logistics

Here is my trip and earnings history for last month from [the app]. Build a table of what I earned per hour by day of the week and time of day, after subtracting fuel at [your cost per mile]. Tell me my three best and three worst blocks of hours. Total my business miles for the month. Then put a reminder on my calendar two weeks before each quarterly estimated tax date this year.

Education and Libraries

Here is my child's school calendar for this year and the class newsletter for this month. List every test, project deadline, early dismissal and day off. Put each one on my calendar with a reminder three days before. Then draft a simple weekly study plan for the next month that works around those dates.

Business and Office

Here are 30 customer emails from last week, with names and account numbers removed. Sort them into groups by what the customer needs. For each group, tell me how many there were, give one example, and draft a reply I could reuse. List separately any email that sounds upset or unusual, so a person handles it. Then put the counts in a small table I can paste into Friday's update, and add a reminder to my calendar for Monday morning to follow up on the upset ones.

Technology and Design

Here are last month's help desk tickets, with names, emails and account details removed: [paste or attach]. Group them by root cause, count each group, and list the five causes that cost the most time. For each of the five, draft a short knowledge article a user could follow on their own, and tell me which ones point to a fix we should make on our side. Then put a reminder on my calendar for the first Monday of next month to run this again.

Science, Agriculture and Environment

Here are my records for last season: [yields by field, what I planted, fertilizer and other inputs, rainfall, or attach the files]. Build a table that compares the fields, and list the three that did worst and the possible reasons I should check on the ground. Then draft a spring planning checklist with these deadlines: [your planting, insurance and program dates], and put each deadline on my calendar with a reminder two weeks before.

Organizing Information and Data

I'm going to give you [three weeks of emails and notes about the client requests I track]. First, suggest the columns a tracker for this should have, with one sentence on why each one matters, and wait for my OK. Then turn everything into a table with one row per [request]. Use the exact wording from my material for names, dates and amounts. If a detail is missing, write MISSING in that cell and do not guess. List any possible duplicates and any items where two sources disagree in a separate section below the table. Finally, tell me the five rows you are least sure about and why.

Designing and Creating

I need a [flyer] for [what] aimed at [who]. Here is the text it must include, exactly as written: [text]. Here is the look I want: [colors, fonts, or describe or attach an example]. Give me three different directions, each with one line on why it would work for [who]. Then make the strongest one at full size, plus a version sized for [a phone screen or printing]. Do not change any of my words.

Testing, Checking and Reviewing

Here is an answer I got from an AI assistant: [paste]. List every claim in it that could be wrong, including each fact, number, date, name, quote and rule. For each one, tell me how I can check it and where: the original source, a calculation I can redo or a person to ask. Mark the three that would do the most damage if they were wrong. Do not tell me whether they are right. I will check them myself.

Investigating and Researching

I need to decide [decision] by [date]. Research [question]. Use sources from the last two years where you can, and give me a link and a date for every fact. Separate what the sources agree on from where they disagree. Tell me which sources are closest to the original, such as a law, a company filing or a government data table, and list anything you could not find. Keep it to one page, with the links at the end.

Building Products and Services

I want to build a simple tool for [who] to [do what]. Today we do it by [how], and the problem is [what goes wrong]. It must [list the two or three must-haves]. It must not [store private information, or go outside the tools we are allowed to use]. Before you start, ask me any questions you have. Then suggest the simplest way to build it with tools I already have, and walk me through building the first version one step at a time.

Communicating and Persuading

I need to tell [who] about [what]. Here are my rough notes: [paste]. They care most about [what], and they may push back on [what]. Write a short message in plain words that says what is changing, why, and what they can do next. Then read it the way [who] would, tell me the two lines most likely to upset them, and suggest a better way to say each one.

Planning and Coordinating

I need to [goal] by [date]. Here is what I know needs to happen: [list]. Here is who is involved and when they are free: [list]. Build a plan working back from the date, with each step, who owns it, when it must start and finish, and what it depends on. Mark the three steps most likely to slip and what I could do if each one does. Then put each deadline on my calendar with a reminder three days before.

Learning and Teaching

I need to learn [topic] so I can [what you need to do] by [date]. I already know [what]. Using this material as the main source: [paste or attach], explain it to me in plain words, one piece at a time, with an example from [your job]. After each piece, ask me one question and wait for my answer before you go on. At the end, give me a ten-question quiz and a study plan that fits [hours] a week, with each study session on my calendar.

Customer Service Representative

Here is our new refund policy. I answer customer calls about it. First, list the ten questions customers are most likely to ask, with a short plain-English answer to each and the page and section it comes from. Then list every exception, deadline and condition in the policy that could change an answer. If anything in the policy is unclear or seems to contradict itself, list it separately so I can ask my supervisor. Then turn the top ten into a one-page cheat sheet I can keep beside my screen.

Customer Service Representative

Play a customer who was double-billed for internet service, has called four times, and is angry and ready to cancel. Stay in character, push back if I sound scripted, and calm down only if I earn it. After five minutes, step out of character and tell me what I did well, where I lost you, and two sentences I could use next time.

The Clear-This-First Checklist

Run through this list before you paste anything into an AI tool, and again before anything the tool made leaves your hands. It takes a minute, and it keeps you, your customers and your employer out of trouble. The chapter on asking well and staying safe explains each point.

Before you paste

- ☐ Swap the names of customers, patients, students, clients and coworkers for made-up ones, such as "Customer A" or "a 50-year-old patient."
- ☐ Delete account numbers, card numbers, policy numbers, Social Security numbers and passwords.
- ☐ Take out addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and dates of birth unless the task needs them.
- ☐ Keep anything your employer treats as confidential, such as pay, plans, contracts, prices and internal numbers, inside the AI tool your employer has approved.
- ☐ Keep health details about anyone out of personal accounts. In health care, patient information is protected by law, so use only the tool your workplace approves.
- ☐ Get permission before you use anyone's photo, voice or words, and never make anything that pretends to be a real person.
- ☐ Tell everyone on a call or in a meeting before you record or transcribe it. Some states, including California, require everyone to agree first.
- ☐ If you are not sure what your workplace allows, ask before you paste.

Before it goes out

- ☐ Check every name, number, date, price and quote against the original.
- ☐ Open every source yourself. A link from an AI tool is a lead until you have read the page.
- ☐ Remove anything the tool added that you cannot back up, such as a discount, a deadline or a promise.
- ☐ Read it out loud, and change the words until it sounds like you.
- ☐ Decide whether it crosses the Decision Line. Anything about money, health or a person's state of mind, and every promise to someone, needs your judgment and your name.
- ☐ When the tool makes the same mistake twice, add a line to your setup so it stops.

Glossary

Plain meanings for the words this book uses most. Tool companies sometimes use different names for the same thing, so the closest common names are in brackets.

Agent

An AI tool that can take steps on its own to finish a task, such as filling in a form, booking a meeting or working through a list of files, instead of only answering in words.

AI assistant

A tool you can type or talk to that answers questions, writes, explains and helps with tasks. ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and Meta AI are all AI assistants.

Ask first, then go

The habit of ending a bigger request with one line: ask me your questions first, then tell me your plan in a few lines and wait for my OK. It keeps you in charge of the work.

Automation

A set of steps that runs on its own when something happens, such as a new form entry, an email or a day of the week. Automation tools connect your apps so information moves between them without copying and pasting.

Composite

A person in this book's stories built from published accounts of a kind of work. Each composite is labeled as one.

Decision Line

The rule under everything in this book. AI does the legwork, and you make the call. Decisions about money, health and a person's state of mind, and every promise you make to someone, stay with you.

Draw the LINE

The four steps the book follows: Learn the tools, Introduce yourself, Never skip the check, and Expand your reach.

Made-up answer

A fact, number, quote or source an AI tool presents with confidence that turns out to be false. People in the field call this a hallucination. Checking against the original is the cure.

Memory

What an AI assistant keeps about you from one conversation to the next. Ask it what it remembers once a month, and fix anything out of date.

Mode

A saved set of instructions for a job you repeat, such as think-deep for hard decisions or boss-ready for short updates to a manager.

Model

The AI system underneath a tool. One company may offer several models in the same app, some faster and some more careful.

Paper Test

An exercise in which a team switches off its AI tools for a set time and runs a normal stretch of work without them, to find the gaps before a real outage does.

Request

What you type or say to an AI tool. Some people call it a prompt. A good request says who you are, what the task is, what to work from, what shape the answer should take and what good looks like.

Research mode

A setting in many AI assistants that searches the web or your files in depth and returns an answer with links to its sources. Names vary, such as deep research.

Setup

The lines you give an AI assistant about who you are, how you want answers and the rules it should follow, so you do not have to repeat

them. Tools call it custom instructions, personalization, preferences or a profile.

Source

The original document, page, study or person a fact comes from. A summary of a source is a lead, and the source itself is what you check.

Transcript

A written record of what was said in a call, meeting or voice note. Many AI tools can make one and then summarize it.

Twice Rule

When a tool makes the same mistake twice, add a short line to your setup so it does not happen a third time.

The wall

The moment work changes under you, through new tools, a changed job or a lost one. This book shows two ways past it: climb it in the job you have, or go around it to a new path.

Work tool

The AI tool your employer has approved, often a business version of Copilot, Gemini, ChatGPT or Claude, with protections a personal account does not have. Use it for anything that involves work information.

How This Book Was Made

This is a book about using AI, and I used AI to write it, so you deserve to know how.

The ideas, the stories from my own life and the opinions are mine. Most chapters began as conversations: I talked and texted with AI assistants, mainly Claude, while doing chores, sitting in waiting rooms and walking, and argued with what came back. The AI did the slow parts. It searched for research, drafted chapters from my notes, checked my arguments and pointed out where I was wrong.

I read every chapter, rewrote what did not sound like me, and decided what stayed. Every figure in the book comes with a source you can check, listed at the end of each chapter, and a final round of fact checking happens before the publication. The people in the stories are composites unless they are named from public sources, and each composite is labeled as one.

In other words, I followed the same rule this book asks you to follow: AI runs the tasks, and I run the results. Any mistakes that remain are mine.

About the Author

Joe Fernandez has spent three decades in information technology, building and running the systems that large organizations depend on. Today he builds and deploys machine learning models and writes books about how people and organizations can use AI well without losing control of it. He holds AI and machine learning certifications from UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business, MIT Professional Education and Johns Hopkins University.

His first book, *The Seatbelt Principle*, is about how organizations can adopt AI safely. *Climb It or Go Around It* is written for everyone else: the people whose work is changing now. He lives in California with his family.

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