Pack Your Priorities and Tools for Productivity in 2025

Course Action Guide

Program Overview:

Stress and Productivity

Choosing the Right Tools and Practices

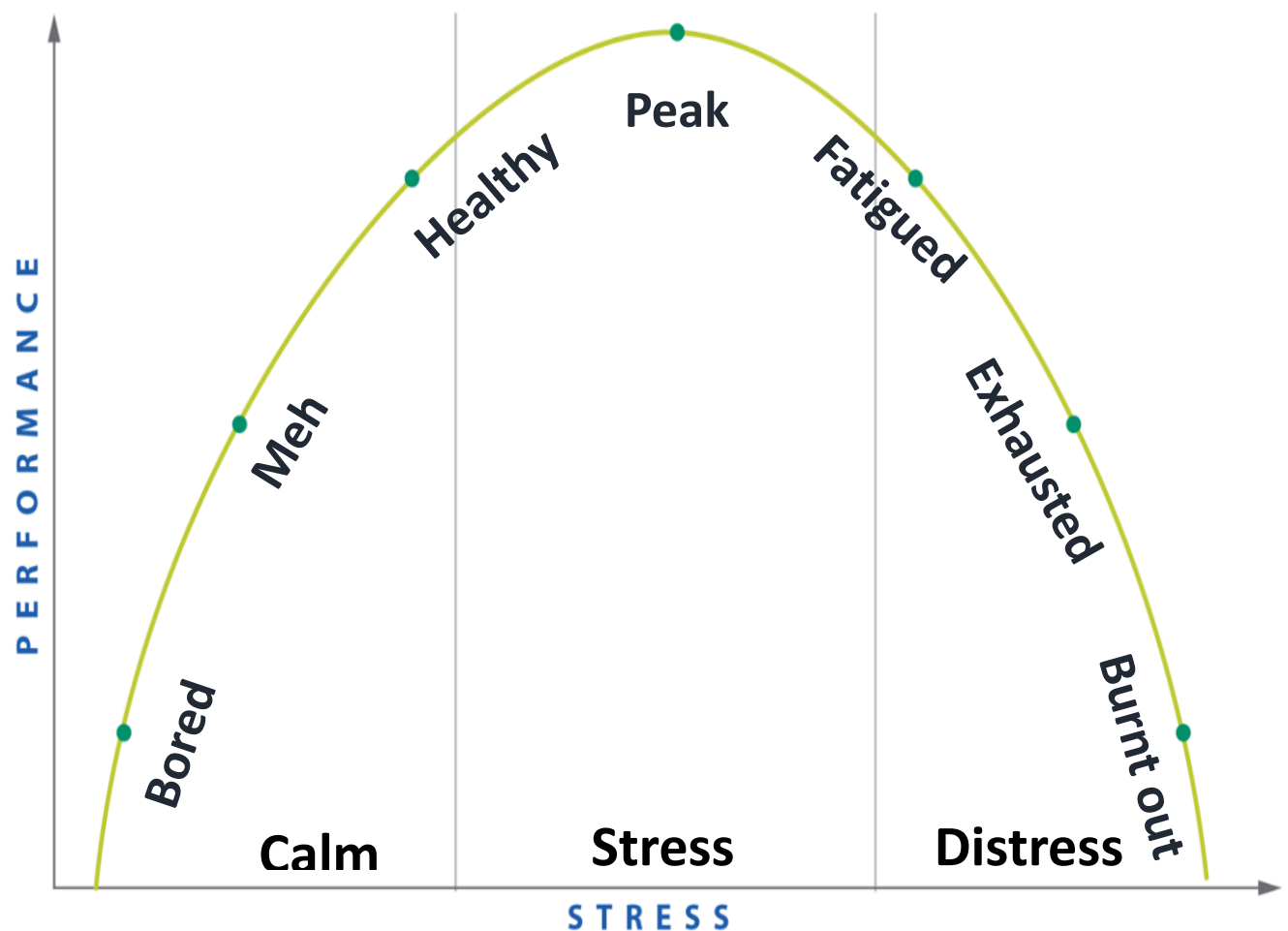Planning and Prioritizing

Setting Boundaries and Communicating Needs

AI Uses and Secrets

Sherry PRINDLe
DriveTrain*ing*

sherry@sherryprindle.com

WSIPC

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WASWUG

4 Types of Stress

1. Time Stress

2. Anticipatory Stress

3. Situational Stress

4. Encounter Stress

Dr. Karl Albrecht *Stress and the Manager*

Yerkes-Dodson Law of Arousal

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

Choosing and Using Tools and Processes
Opportunities and Best Practices

Self-Assessment Tools:

What's Working	What's Not Working

What is this?

Why does it matter?

What if I do it? What if I don't?

What's the best use of my time now?

What can we do differently this time?

What needs to happen?

Will it be important 5 years from now?

Who am I? Why am I here?

If I had 100 million dollars, how would I spend my time?

WSIPC

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WASWUG

Essential Tools for Super Productivity

1. Priority Matrix: Avert crises by considering importance and urgency.

2. Time Log: Know where your time goes.

3. Master List: Capture everything and distribute items to where they need to be.

4. Time Block: Schedule for specific dates and times with room for adjustment.

5. Interruptions Plan – Prioritize on your feet.

6. Meaning Map – Connect to values and priorities.

How are you doing? What elements do you have in place?

Planning and Prioritizing - Harness Time and Choices

What if I do it? What if I don't? Priority Matrix

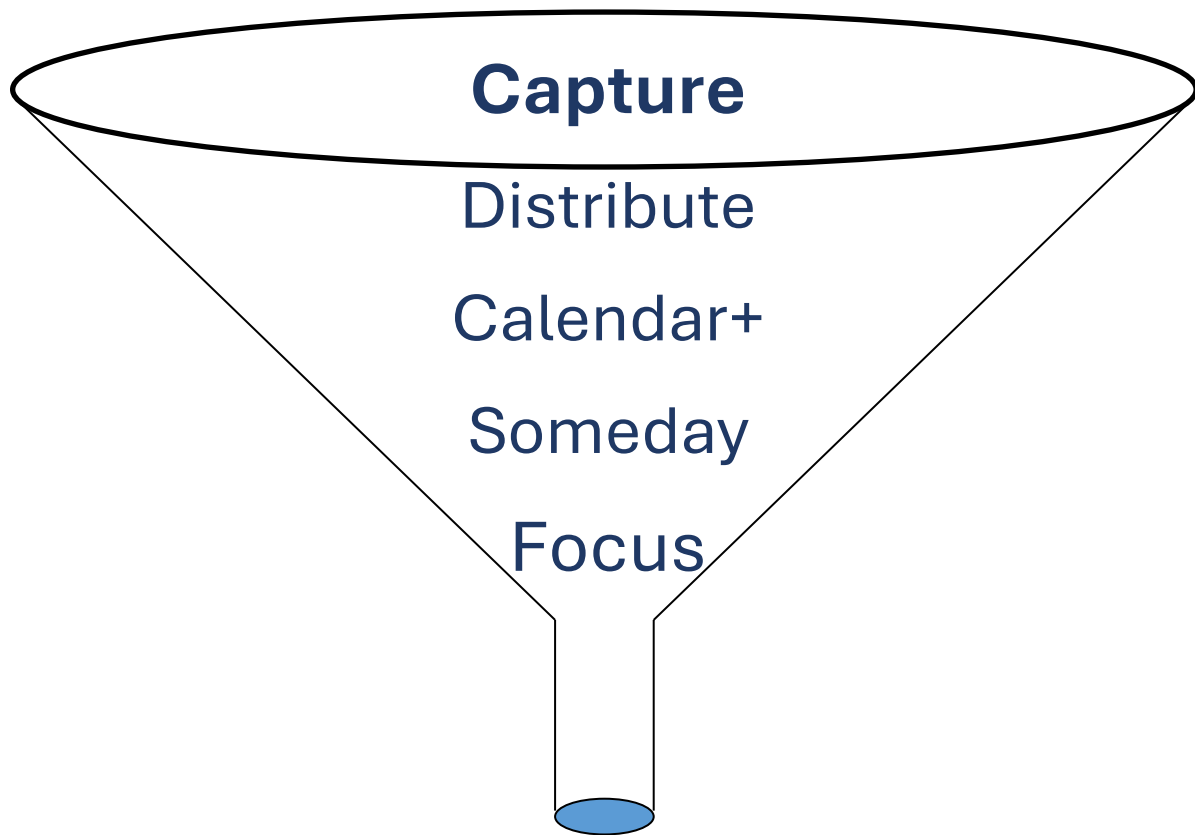List of Quadrant 2 items, personal and at work:

THE FOUR QUADRANTS OF TIME MANAGEMENT

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	1	2
NOT IMPORTANT	3	4

WSIPC

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WASWUG

Time Stress – Where to Start

Time	calls in	calls out	paperwork	e-mail	projects	appointment	planning	interruption	invoicing

Time Log Uses and Benefits

Capture

Distribute

Calendar+

Someday

Focus

Daily Plan

Anticipatory Stress: Master List

TO DO	DOING	DONE

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WSIPC
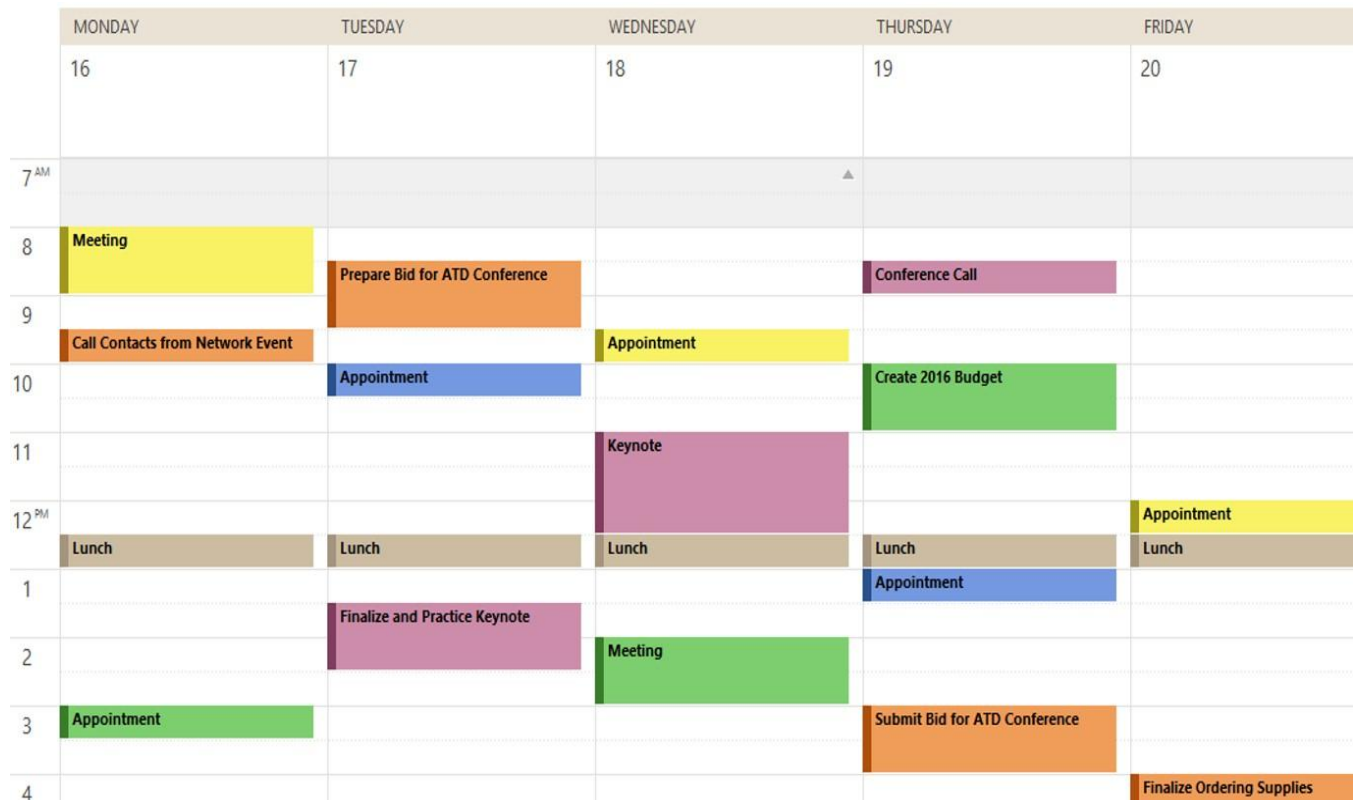
WASWUG
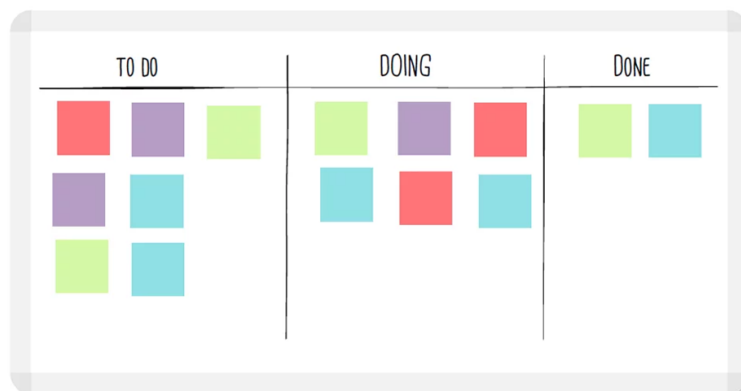
Situational Stress: Time Blocking

Prioritize the priorities: which of your priority items will make or break you? Estimate the time each would take to accomplish and schedule them.

You are 60% more likely to do something scheduled for a specific time.

	MONDAY 16	TUESDAY 17	WEDNESDAY 18	THURSDAY 19	FRIDAY 20
7 AM					
8	Meeting	Prepare Bid for ATD Conference		Conference Call	
9	Call Contacts from Network Event		Appointment		
10		Appointment		Create 2016 Budget	
11			Keynote		
12 PM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Appointment / Lunch
1				Appointment	
2		Finalize and Practice Keynote	Meeting		
3	Appointment			Submit Bid for ATD Conference	
4					Finalize Ordering Supplies

How much time can you plan?

1. Number of hours you work:

2. Percent of time spent on things you would never put on a to-do list:

3. Multiply 1 and 2:

4. Subtract 3 from 1:   = Plannable Time

WSIPC

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WASWUG

Interruption Plan: Do you have a minute?

What are your interrupters?

Interruption Log						
	:00 - :10	:10 - :20	:20 - :30	:30 - :40	:40 - :50	:50 - :00
7:00 AM						
8:00 AM						
9:00 AM						
10:00 AM						
11:00 AM						
12:00 PM						
1:00 PM						
2:00 PM						

Minimizing Interruptions

In-Person

Teleworking

Email

Multiple Bosses

Telephone

Clutter is the Systematic Putting Off of Decisions   –Stephanie Winston

4 things to do with an email:

1. Delete
2. Reply or Forward
3. Save in a Folder
4. Turn into an Action Item
   - Resist putting it back in the Inbox (Move to calendar, Flag as a task)
   - Create action folders (To-do, Awaiting Response, Invoices, etc.)

Narrow Your Options:

- Throw it Away
- Address or Re-Address It
- Route It
- Store It
- Master List

WSIPC

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WASWUG

What Are Your Values?
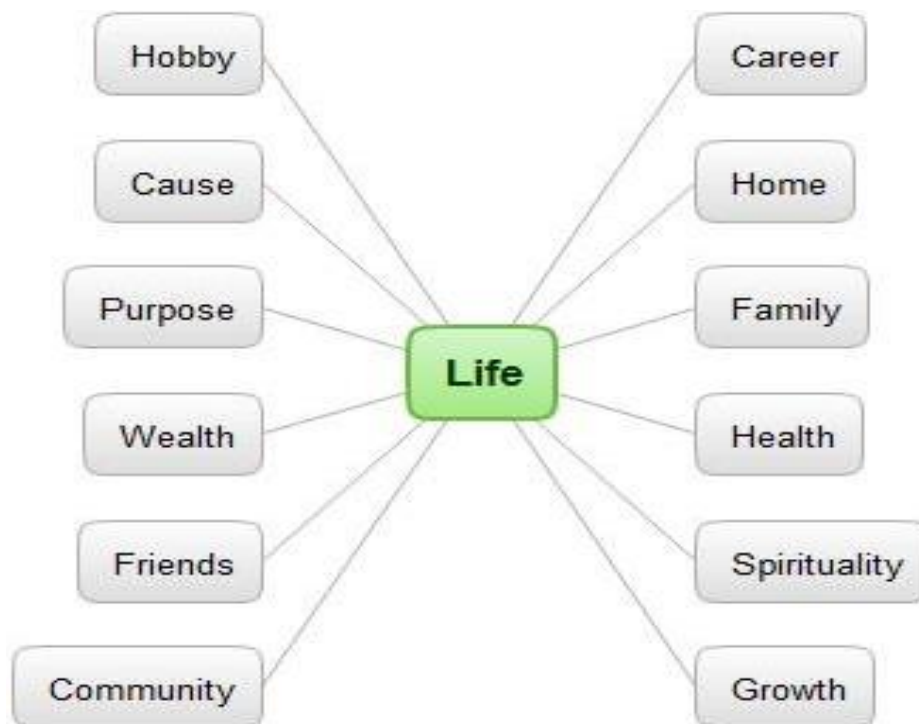
Gain Motivation from Principles and Values

- Identify your values/priorities

- Determine non-negotiables

- Set actions for each area

- Break projects into tasks

- Make an Action Plan

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

Balance and Resilience

Create a map of your priorities. Identify goals and action steps in each area, then take one goal and break it down into tasks. Do this with all major areas of life and with work projects to get them into an actionable format and merge them into your daily plans.

Tolerance Survey: 0=Strongly Disagree - 1=Mildly Disagree - 2=Mildly Agree - 3=Strongly Agree	
	A. Trying my best at work makes a difference.
	B. Trusting to fate is sometimes all I can do in a relationship.
	C. I often wake up eager to start on the day's projects.
	D. Thinking of myself as a free person leads to great frustration and difficulty.
	E. I would be willing to sacrifice financial security in my work if something challenging came along.
	F. It bothers me when I have to deviate from the routine or schedule I've set for myself.
	G. An average citizen can have an impact on politics.
	H. Without the right breaks, it is hard to be successful in my field.
	I. I know why I am doing what I'm doing at work.
	J. Getting close to people puts me at risk of being obligated to them.
	K. Encountering new situations is an important priority in my life.
	L. I really don't mind when I have nothing to do.

A_____ + G_____ = _____   B_____ + H_____ = _____   Control = _____

C_____ + I_____ = _____   D_____ + J_____ = _____   Commitment = _____

E_____ + K_____ = _____   F_____ + L_____ = _____   Challenge = _____

0 - 3 = Low hardiness   4 - 9 = Moderate hardiness   10 - 18 = Hardy

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WSIPC

WASWUG

Mind Mapping Crash Course: Guidelines, Process, Use

There is more to a map than its shape and format. One of the main purposes of mapping is to allow us to capture all the thoughts and information that comes to us in random, 3-dimensional order as quickly as it comes, so that later we can convert it into a linear, usable format. When mapping, it's helpful to follow these **guidelines**:

- Write just a key word or two, not long phrases or sentences

- Write everything that comes to mind, it is brainstorming

- Be random, you can organize later

The **process** of mind mapping goes like this:

1. Start in the center with the name or an image of the topic

2. Dump all thoughts in random order around the circle

3. Look at the items and subgroup like things with like, creating subtopics

4. Flesh out each subtopic

5. Arrange in a usable order starting at 1:00 and working clockwise

6. Convert the map to its final format: Document, Presentation, List, Gantt Chart, etc.

Your brain can only hold 7 plus or minus 2 things at a time, so map if you catch yourself staring at a blank surface. **Use** Maps to:

- Organize Thoughts – Just like you need a scratch sheet to figure a math problem, use mind maps as the interim step that takes ideas into actions, thoughts into plans

- Plan Documents, Presentations, and Conversations – Isn't it easier to organize your thoughts *outside* your head where you can see them?

- Overcome Worry and Anxiety – Your head is ruled by emotion. Dump concerns out on a map to see them objectively and create plans for handling genuine issues

- Take Notes – When we take full-sentence notes, our brains think, "I don't need to remember this; I have it written down." Writing in maps also allows you to capture information in the order it was presented while simultaneously arranging it in the order you will need to use it – no more re-copying

- Accomplish Projects and Goals – People cannot do projects; they can only do tasks. Mind map to break projects down into categories, then smaller projects, then actionable tasks – great for procrastination

- Make Lists – Keeping things in your head is an inefficiency. Mind maps create a visual that is easy to recall even when the list is not in front of you

- Create Databases and Spreadsheets –Plan the layout based on who will be using it and to what end

Six essential steps to implement the solution to a problem.

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WSIPC

WASWUG

Encounter Stress: Boundaries and Feedback

A/EB (Appreciate/Even Better) Feedback Technique

A – Acknowledge positive intent; share what they have done well, or what they need to keep up

EB – Move the conversation forward into what can be done to improve as opposed to criticizing.

"I am impressed with how fast you completed this. From now on, make sure to run spell check; I found three typos."

"The intro is clear, direct, and to the point. It might be even better if you outline the key points in bullet form before getting into the details."

"It is clear you were trying to help, and it's great that you took initiative. Next time, make sure to communicate with leadership before starting something like this; we ended up duplicating effort."

1. Think of a difficult or challenging person in your life. Write down three things you respect or appreciate most about that person. If you can't think of anything, choose a positive intent you could acknowledge.

2. Now write down one thing that person could do to be/do Even Better (what you want them to *start* doing <u>not</u> *stop* doing):

How to Say "No"

Acknowledge the Request

Say, "Sure"

Negotiate the Terms

"You need this ASAP? Sure, I can get started on it now and finish first thing tomorrow; does that work for you?"

"You want me to work on this? Sure, I was scheduled to work on this other thing, so as long as it's okay to push that one back, I'll get started on this one. I just wanted to make sure – which one do you need first?"

Life Balance Exercise

1) Make a map of the life areas below and any others you Want to add. From 1 to 10, rate each area in terms of how it is going for you right now. A 10 means it is going PERFECTLY. A 1 means it is terrible.

Career and Purpose: Profession, volunteer work, your passion, your calling.

Emotion: Self-esteem, self-worth, beliefs, emotional control, level of happiness, ability to be open and vulnerable, mental health, peace with the past.

Environment: Physical location, living space, car, work, storage, clutter, and those who inhabit it.

Finances: Cash flow, debt, investments, financial security, and future.

Friends & Family: relationships, immediate family, children, parents, extended family, close friends.

Fun and Leisure: Relaxation, hobbies, time off, vacation, re-charging.

Health and Fitness: Health, diet, exercise, glucose, cholesterol, wellness, energy, strength, BMI, sleep.

Personal Growth: Learning, technical skills, reading, training, critical thinking, stimulating conversations, self-help.

Romantic: Significant other, dating, intimacy, support, mutual respect, companionship, connection.

Spirituality: God, higher power or force, prayer, meditation, mindfulness, oneness, the divine.

2) Color code each area, and break them down into subcategories. Branch off goals for each area and/or action steps you want or need to take to be more effective and achieve life balance.

3) Identify your *Key Priority*: This area would take care of other areas and have the greatest impact.

4) Do a *Time Log* for a week. Color in the time log according to the colors you gave each life area in step 2. When an action you took correlates with a priority, color it in the color of that life area. Have you missed a priority? How much time do you spend on things that don't correlate with any priorities?

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

AI Uses and Secrets

Where does AI already play a role in your daily life?

1. What are some repetitive tasks you wish you could automate?

2. Where do you sometimes get blocked or overwhelmed in your creativity and thinking?

3. What are some things it is nice to "bounce off" of others' ideas?

4. Where would exploring or integrating large or diverse data sets, resources, or ideas be useful?

5. What are your questions or concerns about AI?

First Task to Try:

Create Projects to Train AI as a Personal Assistant

What Project Clusters Might You Want to Create for Your Area?

Project:

Objective:

Data & Inputs:

Tools & Methods:

Expected Output:

Action Plan

WSIPC

WASWUG

AI Tools

Most AI tools operate similarly at their core – they use a prompt window where you input requests, often leveraging the same underlying AI Model, such as OpenAI's 03 and GPT4o or Anthropic's Claude 3.5. The primary differences among tools lie in the features they add around that core technology and the functions they were programmed to perform.

Text-Based AI Assistants

- **ChatGPT, Microsoft CoPilot, Google Gemini, Claude, Jasper, Perplexity**: Useful for generating prompts, summarizing information, drafting content, and brainstorming ideas.

- **Otter.ai**: Real-time transcription for meetings and audio recordings with automatic summaries.
Graphics and Media

- **Canva**: An easy-to-use tool for designing graphics, presentations, and documents.

- **DALL-E (ChatGPT), Davinci, Clipdrop**: For generating custom images based on text prompts, provides an easy way to create illustrations and concept visuals.

- **Descript, Adobe Premiere Pro**: Text-based video and audio editing, with AI features for transcriptions and media enhancements.

- **Sora (ChatGPT), Runway, Synthesia**: Video creation tool that transforms text into video using AI-driven avatars. Great for producing polished video content without filming quickly.

- **ElevenLabs**: An advanced text-to-speech platform known for lifelike, expressive audio generation. Ideal for creating natural-sounding voiceovers and other narrated content.

Data Analysis and Automation

- **Microsoft Automate Studio and Power BI, Google Data Studio, Rows.com AI:** Connect with sources to create dynamic dashboards and reports, integrating AI-based suggestions for data visualization, making it easy to analyze trends and metrics.

- **Zapier**: Automation tool connects various apps (Google Sheets, Slack) to create automated workflows to streamline repetitive tasks like data entry, report notifications, and reminders.

- **Github Copilot**: AI-powered coding assistant that provides real-time code suggestions, autocompletions, and explanations, helping developers code faster and more efficiently.

Customer Service

- **Tidio, Chatfuel, Drift, Intercom**: Code-free chatbots

- **Google Analytics, HubSpot**: Customer insights

- **Gmail AI Smart Reply, Mailchimp AI suggestions**: Automated Emails

- **MonkeyLearn, Azure AI, Google AI, IBM Watson**: Sentiment Analysis, Predictive Analytics

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WASWUG

Prompt Engineering Checklist

Step 1: Determine the Goal

☐ Ask Yourself: What is the exact outcome I need from the AI?

☐ Write It Down: Start with a simple sentence describing the task; refine to make it specific.

☐ Clearly state the task (e.g., "Summarize," "Analyze," "Create a report").

☐ Avoid vague words; specify what you're asking ("Summarize 2Q sales by product category").

Step 2: Provide Context

☐ Ask Yourself: What background information will help the AI give a better answer?

☐ Add Context: Include any relevant information about the project, audience, or purpose.

☐ Mention the audience if relevant (e.g., "Summarize for an executive report").

☐ Include any project names, specific departments, or other identifiers.

☐ Describe the desired output type (e.g., "Summarize in bullets for a staff briefing").

Step 3: Be Specific and Detailed

☐ Ask: Have I included all necessary details, such as data range or focus areas?

☐ Add Specifics: Define the scope or particular points for AI to cover.

☐ Include dates or timeframes if relevant (e.g., "last quarter," "since project start").

☐ Specify any data focus (e.g., "Focus on training and travel expenses").

☐ Describe length or format, if applicable (e.g., "One paragraph," "3-5 bullet points").

Step 4: Structure the Request for Complex Tasks

☐ Ask Yourself: Should I break down the prompt into sequential parts?

☐ Divide Tasks: For multi-step tasks, prompt AI to address each part in order.

☐ Use a sequence for detailed or complex responses ("First, summarize the main points; then highlight challenges").

☐ Group related information in the prompt if you need multiple pieces of data.

Powered by *Your* Cooperative!

WSIPC

WASWUG

Step 5: Specify Format and Tone (if needed)

☐ Ask Yourself: Is there a specific way I want this response structured?

☐ Describe the Format: If you need lists, tables, or a formal tone, mention it explicitly.

☐ State formatting preferences (e.g., "Provide in bullet points").

☐ Mention tone preferences (e.g., "Use formal language for a report").

☐ Specify any additional formatting, such as labels or headings.

Step 6: Experiment with Prompt Length and Simplicity

☐ Ask Yourself: Is my prompt too detailed or not detailed enough?

☐ Adjust Prompt Length: Rephrase if it's too lengthy or oversimplified; aim for a balance.

☐ Keep prompts concise and avoid unnecessary words.

☐ Ensure every part of the prompt contributes to clarity.

☐ Re-evaluate if a shorter prompt works just as effectively.

Step 7: Test and Refine

☐ Ask Yourself: Does the AI's response meet my expectations? If not, what's missing?

☐ Review and Adjust: Use feedback from AI's initial response to improve your prompt.

☐ Identify missing or incorrect information in the AI response.

☐ Add or adjust details based on the response.

☐ Try rephrasing if results aren't accurate (e.g., "Rephrase to focus more on cost trends").

Prompt Engineering Practice Using the Checklist:

WSIPC

WASWUG