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AI PROMPTING FRAMEWORKS

A Comprehensive Guide

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AI PROMPTING FRAMEWORKS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Your Guide to Working Smarter with AI

Think of AI as Your Co-Pilot, Not Your Autopilot

You wouldn't hand your entire startup to a random stranger and say "build this for me." So why would you treat AI differently? The entrepreneurs who win with AI aren't the ones who let it do all the work—they're the ones who know exactly how to direct it, refine it, and use it to accelerate their own thinking.

This guide will teach you the frameworks that turn AI from a mediocre text generator into a strategic partner in your entrepreneurial journey.

WHY FRAMEWORKS MATTER

The Problem Without Structure

You've probably done this: opened ChatGPT and typed something like:

"Help me with my business idea"

And you got... something. Generic. Vague. Not quite what you needed. You refined it. Tried again. Wasted 20 minutes to get something you still had to rewrite.

That's because AI is a prediction engine, not a mind reader.

Without clear instructions, it has to guess what you want. And when it guesses wrong, you waste time.

The Solution: Structured Prompting

Frameworks give AI the context, constraints, and clarity it needs to deliver exactly what you're looking for—on the first try.

Think of it like this:

WITHOUT FRAMEWORK	WITH FRAMEWORK
"WRITE A PITCH FOR MY APP"	Role: Act as an experienced startup investor. Task: Critique this 2-minute pitch for a meditation app targeting university students. Format: Provide 3 specific improvements and 1 major red flag.
GENERIC, UNUSABLE RESPONSE	Targeted, actionable feedback you can implement immediately

THE AI AS CO-PILOT MINDSET

Before we dive into frameworks, let's establish the right relationship with AI.

✅ AI IS YOUR CO-PILOT WHEN IT:

- **Accelerates your research:** "Find me 10 competitors in the sustainable fashion space and summarise their unique selling points"
- **Tests your assumptions:** "Challenge my business model—what are the 5 biggest risks investors would identify?"
- **Generates options:** "Give me 20 names for a plant-based protein bar brand targeting Gen Z"
- **Speeds up execution:** "Turn these interview notes into customer persona insights"

❌ AI IS YOUR AUTOPILOT (AND YOU'RE IN TROUBLE) WHEN IT:

- **Replaces your strategic thinking:** "Write my entire business plan"
- **Makes decisions for you:** "Should I pivot to B2B or stay B2C?"
- **Creates content you don't verify:** "Write a blog post about X" (then you publish it without reading)
- **Does your customer research:** "Tell me what my target market wants"

The Rule: AI generates options and accelerates work. YOU provide judgment, strategy, and verification.

BEGINNER FRAMEWORKS: START HERE

These frameworks are perfect when you're just getting started with AI or need quick, straightforward results.

1. RTF FRAMEWORK (Role-Task-Format)

Best for: Quick outputs, lists, summaries, and straightforward requests

Structure:

Component	What It Means	Example
Role	Who should the AI be?	"Act as a marketing strategist"
Task	What exactly do you want?	"Generate 5 Instagram post ideas"
Format	How should it be presented?	"In a numbered list with caption + visual idea"

When to Use RTF:

- You need something fast
- The request is straightforward
- You want organised, structured output
- You're generating lists, ideas, or simple content

Example in Entrepreneurship:

Role: Act as a customer service expert for e-commerce startups.
 Task: Write 5 templates for responding to "Where is my order?" emails.
 Format: Present as a numbered list, each template 2-3 sentences with [CUSTOMER NAME] and [ORDER NUMBER] placeholders.

Why It Works: RTF eliminates ambiguity. The AI knows exactly who it's supposed to be, what it's supposed to do, and how you want the output. No guesswork.

Limitations:

- Too simple for complex strategic work
- Doesn't handle nuanced scenarios well
- Limited depth—great for speed, not sophistication

2. BASIC DIRECT PROMPTING

Best for: Search, factual lookup, quick explanations

Structure: Just ask clearly and directly. No framework needed.

When to Use Direct Prompting:

- Looking up definitions or facts
- Quick calculations
- Simple searches
- Conversational questions that don't need structure

Examples:

Type	Example Prompt
Search	"What are the top 3 startup accelerators in Australia focused on sustainability?"
Analysis	"What's the difference between angel investors and venture capitalists?"
Conversational	"Explain unit economics like I'm in first-year business school"
Task-Focused	"Calculate how many customers I need at \$49/month to reach \$10K MRR"

Why It Works: Sometimes you just need an answer. Don't overcomplicate it.

When It Breaks Down:

- Complex requests without structure get messy
- Multi-step tasks fall apart
- Creative or strategic work needs more guidance

INTERMEDIATE FRAMEWORKS | LEVEL UP YOUR AI GAME

Once you're comfortable with basic prompting, these frameworks unlock significantly better results for complex entrepreneurial tasks.

3. COSTAR FRAMEWORK (Context-Objective-Style-Tone-Audience-Response)

Best for: Content creation, marketing, pitch decks, professional communication.

Structure:

Component	What It Means	Example
Context	Background info, situation	"We're launching a SaaS tool for freelancers to track invoices"
Objective	What you want to achieve	"Create a landing page that converts free users to paid subscribers"
Style	Writing style	"Conversational and clear, not technical jargon"
Tone	Emotional feel	"Reassuring and helpful, addressing their pain points"
Audience	Who will read this	"Freelance designers and developers aged 25-40"
Response Format	Output structure	"Write in 3 sections: Hero text, Features, Testimonial template"

When to Use COSTAR:

- Creating marketing copy
- Writing pitch deck content
- Developing brand messaging
- Crafting investor emails
- Building customer-facing content

Entrepreneurship Example:

Context: We're a pre-seed startup with a mobile app that helps Gen Z track their carbon footprint through daily choices.

Objective: Write a 30-second elevator pitch that gets someone to ask for more details.

Style: Casual and authentic, not preachy or corporate.

Tone: Empowering and optimistic—"you can make a difference"—not guilt-inducing.

Audience: Potential angel investors who care about climate impact but also want ROI.

Response Format: 3-4 sentences maximum. Start with a relatable problem, then the solution, then the opportunity.

Why It's Powerful: COSTAR leaves nothing to chance. You've controlled every variable that affects quality. The AI knows exactly who it's writing for, why, and how it should sound.

Pro Tip: Use COSTAR when the stakes are high—investor communications, public-facing content, or anything where brand voice matters.

4. TAG FRAMEWORK (Task-Action-Goal)

Best for: Eliminating vague instructions, forcing specificity, and role-based tasks

Structure:

Component	What It Means	Example
Task	Define the domain/role	"You are a financial analyst for early-stage startups"
Action	Specify exactly what to do	"Analyse this 3-year revenue projection and identify unrealistic assumptions"
Goal	Clarify constraints and success	"Provide 3 specific concerns an investor would raise, under 200 words"

When to Use TAG:

- You need precision and focus
- Role-playing scenarios (act as investor, customer, competitor)
- Analytical tasks
- Critique and feedback requests

Entrepreneurship Example:

Task: You are a Shark Tank investor evaluating a pitch for a subscription box service.

Action: Review this business model and identify the single biggest reason you would say "I'm out."

Goal: Provide one critical flaw with a 2-sentence explanation of why it's a deal-breaker.

Why It Works: TAG forces specificity. You can't be vague because the framework demands clarity at every step.

Best Use Case: When you need AI to play a specific role and give you honest, critical feedback—not generic encouragement.

5. RACE FRAMEWORK (Role-Audience-Constraints-Execution Plan)

Best for: Stakeholder alignment, clear communication, step-by-step reasoning.

Structure:

Component	What It Means	Example
Role	Who is the AI acting as?	"Act as a senior business consultant"
Audience	Who is the output for?	"Non-technical co-founders"
Constraints	Boundaries and rules	"Avoid jargon, focus on actionable steps, max 300 words"
Execution Plan	Step-by-step process	"1. Define the problem, 2. Outline solutions, 3. Prioritise by impact"

When to Use RACE:

- Explaining complex topics to different audiences
- Creating step-by-step guides
- Investor updates
- Team communications where clarity is critical

Entrepreneurship Example:

<p>Role: Act as a startup operations consultant.</p> <p>Audience: First-time founders with no finance background.</p> <p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid accounting terminology - Focus on practical "how-to" steps - Keep it under 250 words <p>Execution Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain why tracking burn rate matters 2. Show how to calculate it (simple formula) 3. Give 2 red flags that mean you're burning too fast 4. Provide 1 action to take this week

Why It's Powerful: RACE ensures your output is appropriate for WHO will read it, not just technically correct. It's audience-first thinking.

6. RISE FRAMEWORK (Role-Instructions-Steps-Expectations)

Best for: Multi-step processes, detailed projects, structured workflows

Structure:

Component	What It Means	Example
Role	Who should AI be?	"You are an expert UX researcher"
Instructions	Overall task	"Design a customer interview guide for a food delivery app"
Steps	Specific sequence	"1. Identify goals, 2. Write 10 questions, 3. Add follow-up prompts"
Expectations	Success criteria	"Questions should uncover pain points, not yes/no answers"

When to Use RISE:

- Building processes or workflows
- Project planning
- Creating research frameworks
- Developing structured outputs that require multiple phases

Entrepreneurship Example:

<p>Role: You are an experienced startup pitch coach.</p> <p>Instructions: Help me prepare for a 5-minute investor pitch by creating a practice plan.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the 5 most common investor objections for my type of business 2. Write a strong counter-argument for each 3. Create 3 practice exercises to rehearse delivery 4. Suggest how to track improvement over 2 weeks <p>Expectations: The plan should be actionable (I can start today), specific (not generic advice), and designed for someone with limited pitch experience.</p>

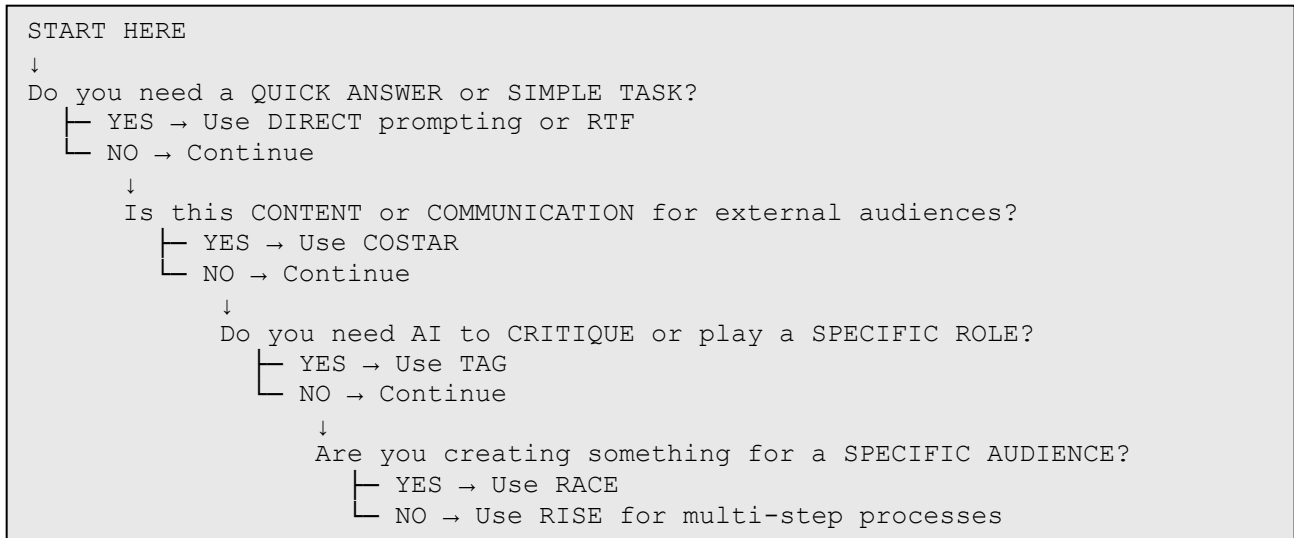
Why It Works: RISE breaks complexity into manageable chunks. It's like giving AI a project brief with clear deliverables.

COMPARING THE FRAMEWORKS

Framework	Complexity	Best For	Time to Learn	Output Quality
RTF	★ Simple	Quick lists, ideas, summaries	5 minutes	Good for speed
Direct	★ Simplest	Facts, lookups, simple questions	1 minute	Functional
COSTAR	★★★ Moderate	Marketing, content, communications	15 minutes	Excellent for brand
TAG	★★ Easy-Moderate	Critiques, role-play, precision	10 minutes	Great for focus
RACE	★★★ Moderate	Stakeholder content, explanations	15 minutes	Excellent for clarity
RISE	★★★ Moderate	Workflows, processes, planning	20 minutes	Excellent for depth

WHEN TO USE WHICH FRAMEWORK

Your Decision Tree:



Common Entrepreneurship Tasks Matched to Frameworks:

Task	Best Framework	Why
Generate startup name ideas	RTF	Quick, creative output
Explain blockchain to non-tech investors	RACE	Audience-specific clarity
Write Instagram captions for product launch	COSTAR	Brand voice + tone control
Get feedback on pitch deck slide order	TAG	Role-play as investor
Build customer interview script	RISE	Multi-step structured process
Calculate TAM/SAM/SOM	Direct	Simple factual task
Draft investor update email	COSTAR	Professional communication
Create go-to-market strategy	RISE	Complex multi-phase plan

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

EXAMPLE 1: CUSTOMER RESEARCH (Using RISE)

Scenario: You need to understand why customers aren't converting from free to paid.

Prompt:

Role: You are a conversion rate optimisation expert for SaaS startups.

Instructions: Help me design a research plan to understand why free users aren't upgrading to our \$29/month plan.

Steps:

1. Identify 5 potential reasons for low conversion
2. Design a 7-question survey to test these hypotheses
3. Suggest how to analyse results (what patterns to look for)
4. Recommend 2 quick experiments to run based on findings

Expectations: The plan should be executable with a 2-person team and provide insights within 2 weeks.

Why This Works:

- Role establishes expertise domain
- Instructions clarify the business problem
- Steps ensure a comprehensive, logical process
- Expectations set practical constraints

EXAMPLE 2: COMPETITOR ANALYSIS (Using TAG)

Scenario: You need to understand how competitors position themselves.

Prompt:

Task: You are a competitive intelligence analyst for consumer tech startups.

Action: Analyse the positioning strategies of Calm, Headspace, and Insight Timer (meditation apps). Identify what makes each unique and where there are gaps in the market.

Goal: Create a 2x2 positioning matrix showing how they differentiate, then identify one underserved customer segment. Present in a table format with bullet points. Max 250 words.

Why This Works:

- Task assigns the analytical role
- Action is specific (not "analyse competitors" but exact companies + what to analyse)
- Goal provides output format and constraints

EXAMPLE 3: PITCH DECK CONTENT (Using COSTAR)

Scenario: You're creating your "Why Now?" slide for investors.

Prompt:

Context: We're building a B2B platform that helps small accounting firms automate client onboarding. The market has changed because: 1) Remote work made old paper processes obsolete, 2) New regulations require digital record-keeping, 3) SMBs can't afford enterprise software.

Objective: Write the content for our "Why Now?" pitch deck slide that proves this is the perfect time for our solution.

Style: Data-driven but accessible, using specific market stats where relevant.

Tone: Confident and urgent (momentum is building), not fearful or panicked.

Audience: Angel investors who understand B2B SaaS but may not know accounting industry deeply.

Response Format:

- One headline (10 words max)
- Three supporting points (one sentence each)
- One compelling stat or quote

Why This Works:

- Context gives market dynamics
- Objective is crystal clear
- Style + Tone + Audience ensure appropriate messaging
- Response Format makes it immediately usable in slides

AI USE IN YOUR ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNEY

✅ APPROPRIATE AI USE:

Idea Generation & Validation

- "Generate 20 variations of my value proposition for A/B testing"
- "What are 10 questions I should ask in customer discovery interviews?"
- "Critique my business model—where are the weak points?"

Research & Analysis

- "Summarise these 5 competitor websites and identify their key differentiators"
- "Analyse this customer survey data and identify the top 3 pain points"
- "What regulatory requirements apply to food delivery startups in Australia?"

Content & Communication

- "Write 3 versions of my elevator pitch with different emotional hooks"
- "Turn these bullet points into a compelling LinkedIn post"
- "Create email templates for investor follow-ups"

Financial Modelling

- "If my CAC is \$50 and LTV is \$200, what does my LTV:CAC ratio need to be?"
- "Model 3 pricing scenarios: \$29, \$49, \$79/month with different conversion assumptions"
- "What questions will investors ask about these financial projections?"

Process & Planning

- "Create a 90-day launch timeline with key milestones"
- "Build a customer onboarding checklist"
- "Design a simple A/B test for homepage messaging"

✗ INAPPROPRIATE AI USE:

Strategic Decisions

- ✗ "Should I pivot to B2B or stay B2C?" → AI doesn't know your market deeply enough
- ✓ "What are the pros and cons of B2B vs B2C for my specific product?"

Customer Understanding

- ✗ "Tell me what university students want in a study app" → AI makes up generic insights
- ✓ "Help me analyse these 10 customer interviews to identify patterns"

Financial Projections

- ✗ "Create realistic 3-year projections for my startup" → AI will fabricate numbers
- ✓ "If I assume X growth rate and Y costs, show me the math for 3 years"

Wholesale Content Creation

- ✗ "Write my entire investor deck" → Lacks your unique insights and voice
- ✓ "Help me refine the wording on my Problem slide based on this customer research"

COMBINING FRAMEWORKS FOR COMPLEX TASKS

The real power comes when you chain frameworks together.

Example: Building an Investor Pitch

Step 1: Use TAG to get feedback

Task: Act as a critical Shark Tank investor

Action: Identify the 3 weakest parts of this pitch outline

Goal: Tell me why each would make you say "I'm out" (be brutal)

Step 2: Use COSTAR to refine messaging

Context: Based on feedback, my problem statement wasn't compelling enough

Objective: Rewrite the problem section to create urgency

Style: Story-driven with a specific customer scenario

Tone: Empathetic but not dramatic

Audience: Investors who need to see the pain is real and large

Response Format: 2-3 sentences with one specific customer example

Step 3: Use RISE to practice delivery

Role: You are a pitch coach

Instructions: Create a practice plan for my 5-minute pitch



Steps:

1. Break pitch into timed sections
2. Identify where I'm most likely to stumble
3. Create rehearsal exercises
4. Design a 2-week practice schedule

Expectations: Actionable, specific to my pitch content, builds confidence

PRO TIPS FOR BETTER AI PROMPTING

1. Be Specific, Not Vague

 Vague	 Specific
"Help with marketing"	"Generate 5 Instagram post ideas for launching a sustainable activewear brand to Gen Z women"
"Analyse competitors"	"Compare the pricing strategies of Notion, Coda, and Airtable for their free tiers"
"Write an email"	"Draft a 100-word follow-up email to an investor who asked for our deck after a networking event"

2. Use Examples When Possible

Role: Marketing copywriter

Task: Write 3 product descriptions

Format: Short paragraphs (50 words each)

Example of our brand voice:

"We don't believe in hustle culture. We believe in building something sustainable—for you, your team, and the planet. That's why every decision we make asks: does this create more freedom or more stress?"

Now write for: [your product]

3. Iterate in the Same Conversation

Don't start a new chat every time. Build on previous responses:

- "Make it more conversational"
- "Add a specific stat to support point #2"
- "Rewrite for a B2B audience instead of B2C"

The AI has context from earlier in the conversation.

4. Ask for Variations

Give me 3 versions:

- Version A: Formal and data-driven
- Version B: Casual and story-based
- Version C: Bold and contrarian

Then pick the one that resonates.

5. Verify Everything

AI is confident even when it's wrong. Always:

- Fact-check statistics and claims
- Verify company names and comparisons
- Test financial calculations independently
- Cross-reference strategic advice with real sources

6. Document What Works

Build your own prompt library. When you find a prompt that delivers gold, save it in Notion/Google Docs with:

- The framework used
- The task it solved
- Why it worked well

Over time, you'll have a personal playbook.

YOUR AI LEARNING PATH

Week 1: Beginner Foundations

- Practice RTF for 5 different tasks
- Try Direct prompting for research questions
- Goal: Get comfortable with basic structure

Week 2: Experiment with Intermediate Frameworks

- Use COSTAR for one piece of content
- Use TAG for getting feedback
- Goal: See the quality difference

Week 3: Apply to Your Venture

- Pick one entrepreneurial task (customer research, pitch prep, competitor analysis)
- Use the appropriate framework
- Iterate until you get genuinely useful output

Week 4: Build Your Playbook

- Document 5 prompts that worked brilliantly
- Note which frameworks you prefer and why
- Identify tasks where AI saves you the most time

REMEMBER: AI IS YOUR CO-PILOT

AI doesn't replace entrepreneurial thinking. It accelerates it.

You still need to:

- ✓ Talk to real customers
- ✓ Make strategic decisions
- ✓ Understand your market deeply
- ✓ Take responsibility for your business choices

AI helps you:

- ⚡ Explore options faster
- ⚡ Test assumptions quickly
- ⚡ Generate variations efficiently
- ⚡ Accelerate execution

The entrepreneurs who win aren't the ones who use AI the most—they're the ones who use it the best.

Now go build something worth building.



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