In my 18-year marketing career, I've written millions of words of marketing copy.

I started my career by creating copy for early e-commerce brands on Myspace, then worked in not-for-profit fundraising, influencer marketing, and now real-estate coaching.

I'm now a chief brand officer for a real-estate-coaching business. Language-modeling AI tools like ChatGPT quickly get me 80% or 90% of the way to finished work.

I started using AI tools in 2022 but didn't find them to be effective at capturing brand voice and tone. Then ChatGPT took the world by storm in 2023. I use it for dozens of things every day, but these five hacks have been the most helpful.

Quickly write social-media posts and emails

I work for an industry-disrupting real-estate company; most of our advice goes against conventional wisdom. If I let ChatGPT generate without an outline, it'll give me posts and emails full of outdated conventional advice.

So I prompt ChatGPT with: "Write me a [number]-word social media post/email in a conversational tone like Jess Lenouvel using the following outline," adding three or four bullet points.

Adding our CEO's name to the prompt helps ChatGPT mimic her writing tone, cadence, and even emoji usage.

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Create variations of the same message

Figuring out new and exciting ways to convey the same message in copy is a struggle. After you've been working at the same place for five years, you run out of creative variations for ads and content.

To generate variations of copy I've already written, I use this prompt for ChatGPT: "Think like a digital marketer and generate four variants of this Facebook ad copy."

I feed the AI one example because I like to have some control over the initial messaging. ChatGPT can struggle to get the tone of our brand right if I don't give it a clear starting point. If I give it a more general prompt, it inevitably puts together stiff-sounding copy with strategies we'd never use.

Check and modify the copy's tone and reading level

People want easily understandable content in their inboxes and on social media. The average American is <u>thought to read at a seventh- or eighth-grade level</u>.

I think the best marketing copy reads a little below that, at a fifth- or sixth-grade level. This means short sentences and paragraphs, a conversational tone, and simple language.

Before ChatGPT, I'd use <u>Hemingway</u> to test the reading level of my copy and fiddle with sentences to hit a fifth-grade level. With ChatGPT, I can write freely and then prompt the AI to change the reading level and tone for me.

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Overall, I save 20 to 30 minutes a day with this prompt.

Write long-form storytelling posts by giving the AI a specific structure and outline

Storytelling is the backbone of psychology-based marketing. Our company is positioned like a personal brand, so I have to engage audiences with personal and emotional stories about our CEO and our successful members.

But writing long prose can be tedious, so I get GPT-4 to do it for me. It's better at this storytelling than the 3.5 version.

Here are two prompts I use:

1. "Following this story structure — 1. Capture the heart, 2. Set up a tension, 3. Resolve the tension, 4. Conclude by offering value — write a 1,000-word story at a grade-five reading level in the first person using the following information," followed by a list of plot points.
2. "Write a 400-word social media post in a conversational first-person tone like Jess Lenouvel about [topic] using the following story points."

The more specific you can be in your instructions, the better output you're going to get.

Generate A/B-test hypotheses for troubleshooting marketing problems

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Sometimes as a marketer you need to solve a problem but aren't sure how to test alternatives or which metrics to track to determine which strategy is better.

ChatGPT can help with that, too. It can comb through specific tests a company's looking to run for optimizing landing pages, increasing sales, or lowering bounce rates, and it can generate ideas to help guide your strategy.

Here's a recent prompt I gave it: "I'm running an A/B test to compare application page A and application page B in order to increase the number of applications to our program, and I need help generating hypotheses based on email click rate and form completion. Can you provide recommendations for what to test and how to measure success?"

Based on the suggestions from ChatGPT, we'd test:

- Adding a button to our emails to increase the open rate as opposed to plain-text linking.
- Varying the language on the button to see which generates a better click rate.
- Reducing the number of questions on our application page.

These are only some of the many ways I'm using generative AI. I interact with other marketers on Discord servers and in Facebook groups to get more ideas for using ChatGPT.

On average, ChatGPT saves me between six and eight hours a week.

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Almost every time I've asked myself "I wonder if ChatGPT can do this" or "I wonder how I could get ChatGPT to help me with this," I've unlocked a new way of streamlining or optimizing my workflow.

Read next

- **Anna Bernstein is a prompt engineer at Copy.ai, which makes AI tools to generate posts and emails.**
- **Her job is to write prompts to train the bot to generate high-quality, accurate writing.**
- **Here are three tips on how to write prompts to get the best outcomes from AI.**

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This as-told-to essay is based on conversations with Anna Bernstein, a 29-year-old prompt engineer at the generative-AI firm Copy.ai based in New York. The following has been edited for length and clarity.

When I was a freelance writer and historical research assistant, I spent a lot of my time scrolling through microfiche in libraries. Now, I'm a prompt engineer helping to optimize the most cutting-edge technology in the world.

My journey into prompt engineering began in the summer of 2021 when I met a guy at a jazz bar who, at the time, worked for Copy.ai, which makes an AI tool that can generate copy for blogs, sales emails, and social media posts.

He mentioned that Copy.ai — run on OpenAI's GPT-3 language model — was having some trouble with the quality of its outputs and asked if I wanted to take a stab at being a prompt person. Even though I was an English major and had no background in tech, I said yes; I didn't like the stress of freelancing and this seemed fascinating to me.

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SAP introduces the next generation of its data management portfolio

Soon after, I got offered a one-month contract to work on executing different types of tones. At first, I barely knew what I was doing. But then the founder explained that prompting is kind of like writing a spell: If you say the spell slightly wrong, something slightly wrong can happen — and vice versa. Taking his advice, I managed to come up with a solution for better tone adherence, which led to a full-time job offer at the company.

Since then, the scope of my job has grown; I now help improve existing tools and create new ones with the goal of getting the AI to spit out the best responses for users.

In practice, I spend my days writing text-based prompts — which I can't reveal due to my NDA — that I feed into the back end of the AI tools so they can do things such as generate a blog post that is high-quality, grammatically correct, and factually accurate.

I do this by designing the text around a user's request. In simple terms, a user types something like, "write a product description about a pair of sneakers," which I receive on the back end. It's my job, then, to write prompts that can get that query to generate the best output through:

- Instruction, or "write a product description about this."
- Example-following, or "here are some good product descriptions, write one like this about this."

In addition to the pure prompt-engineering part of my job, I also advise on how the models behave, why they might behave the way they do, which model to use, whether we can make a specific tool, and what approach we should take to do that.

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I love the "mad scientist" part of the job where I'm able to come up with a dumb idea for a prompt and see it actually work. As a poet, the role also feeds into my obsessive nature with approaching language. It's a really strange intersection of my literary background and analytical thinking.

The job, however, is unpredictable. New language models come out all the time, which means I'm always having to readjust my prompts. The work itself can be tedious. There are days when I'm obsessively changing and testing a single prompt for hours — sometimes even weeks on end — just so I can get them to work.

At the same time, it's exciting to not know what's coming next.

Aside from people at parties not understanding my job, one of the big misconceptions I've noticed about AI is the idea that it is sentient when it's not. When it tries to talk about being an AI, we freak out because we see so many of our fears reflected in what it's saying. But that's because it's trained on our fears informed by scary, sci-fi depictions of AI.

Writing good prompts is easy to pick up, but it's difficult to master. Getting the AI to do what you want it to do takes trial and error, and with time, I've picked up weird strategies along the way; some of my prompts are really wild in structure.

Here are some tips that can help you develop better prompts:

1. Use a thesaurus

Don't give up on a concept just because your first prompt didn't get the result you wanted. Often, finding the right word or phrasing can unlock what you're doing.

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2. Pay attention to your verbs

If you want the AI to fully understand your request, make sure your prompt includes a verb that clearly expresses your intent. For instance, "condense this," is more powerful than, "rewrite this to be shorter."

3. ChatGPT is great at recognizing intent, so use that

Introduce what you're trying to do clearly from the beginning, and play around with wording, tense, and approach. You can try, "today, we're going to write an XYZ," or, "we're trying to write an XYZ and we'd like your input." Putting an umbrella of intent over what you're doing is always useful, and playing around with different ways to do that can make a big difference.

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