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Using Generative AI in Public Relations

Generative AI is software that creates new text, images, or other material from a prompt you write. In public relations, that means a tool can draft a press release opening, suggest headline options, turn long notes into a short summary, or rewrite the same announcement for different audiences. It does not think the way a person thinks. It predicts likely words based on patterns in large amounts of training material. That is why it can sound confident and polished while still being wrong about a date, a name, or a fact that matters.

This topic helps anyone who speaks for an organization in public: a small business owner writing their own announcements, a nonprofit leader preparing a statement, a community manager answering questions online, or a staff member who has been handed the communications job along with three other jobs. You do not need to be a technology expert. You need to understand what the tool is good at, where it fails, and how to stay in charge of every word that goes out under your name.

Why does this matter now? Because these tools are already in the inbox, the browser, and the phone of almost everyone doing communications work. Used well, they save hours on first drafts, help a small team sound consistent, and make it easier to prepare for hard questions before a reporter asks them. Used carelessly, they publish invented facts, copy someone else's voice, leak private information that was pasted into a prompt, or send a message that sounds warm in a draft and cold in a real crisis. The skill is not letting the tool write for you. The skill is directing it, checking it, and owning the final result.

A final honest point before the lessons begin. Generative AI does not replace relationships, judgment, or accountability in public relations. A reporter trusts a person, not a program. A community forgives a person who shows up and tells the truth, not a polished paragraph nobody will stand behind. Everything in this set is built on one rule: the tool can help you prepare, but a named human reviews, approves, and answers for every public word.

What You Will Learn

- What generative AI actually does when it writes, and why it can sound sure while being wrong.
- How to write clear prompts that give the tool your facts, audience, tone, and limits.
- How to check every AI draft for invented facts, wrong names and dates, and risky claims before it goes out.
- How to use AI to draft and adapt releases, statements, social posts, and answers without losing your own voice.
- How to protect private, personal, and embargoed information when you use any AI tool.
- How to use AI to prepare for media work — backgrounders, question lists, and pitch angles — without spamming reporters.

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- How to build a simple, repeatable workflow with clear human checkpoints that a small team can actually follow.

Lesson 1 — What the Tool Is and What It Is Not

Public relations is the work of building understanding and trust between an organization and the people it serves. The tools change — press releases by fax, then by email, then by social post — but the work stays the same: tell the truth clearly, listen carefully, and respond like a human being when things go wrong. Generative AI is one more tool in that line. Understanding it starts with a plain description of how it works.

When you type a prompt, the tool does not look up an answer in a verified file. It generates text one piece at a time, choosing words that are statistically likely to follow what came before, based on patterns it learned from enormous collections of text. That is why it is excellent at structure, tone, and familiar formats. A press release, a thank-you note, and an event invitation all have shapes the tool has seen thousands of times. It can reproduce those shapes quickly and fluently. It is also why the tool can invent a quote, a statistic, or a person's title without any sign that it is guessing. The fluency is real. The knowledge behind it is not guaranteed.

This leads to the most important distinction in this whole topic: drafting help is not the same as a source. If you need a fact — a founding date, a price, a law, a person's correct title, the number of people at an event — you get that fact from your own records, an official document, or the person themselves, and then you give it to the tool. You never ask the tool to supply the fact and then trust what comes back. Think of the tool as a fast junior writer with perfect grammar, no memory of your organization, no conscience, and no way to know when it is wrong. A good manager would never send that writer's first draft straight to a newspaper. A good manager gives clear instructions, checks the work line by line, and signs the final version personally. That is exactly the relationship to build with generative AI.

The tool is genuinely strong at certain PR tasks. It can turn your rough bullet points into a clean first draft. It can shorten a long statement without dropping the main point, or expand a short announcement into a fuller backgrounder. It can suggest ten headline options when your brain is stuck on one. It can rewrite the same news for a newsletter, a social post, and a spoken script, keeping the facts steady while the length changes. It can role-play a skeptical reporter and fire hard questions at you before an interview, which is one of its most valuable and least risky uses. And it can help non-native writers or nervous writers find plain, confident wording for ideas they already have.

Its weaknesses are just as consistent. It does not know what happened at your organization yesterday unless you tell it. It may use information that was true years ago and is not true now. It tends toward generic, flattering language — every event is "exciting," every leader is "visionary" — unless you direct it otherwise. It can reproduce biased or stereotyped phrasing present in its training material. It cannot judge whether a joke is appropriate during a crisis, whether a phrase has a painful history for your community, or whether now is the wrong moment to post at all. Those judgments are the heart of public relations, and they remain human work.

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There is also a privacy reality to understand from day one. Many AI tools keep or learn from what users type, depending on the product, the plan, and the settings. The safe working rule is simple: never paste anything into a prompt that you would not be comfortable seeing outside your organization. That includes unreleased financial figures, personal information about staff or clients, legal documents, medical details, passwords, and announcements that are under embargo — meaning agreed not to be published before a set time. Lesson 3 returns to this in depth, because one careless paste can do more damage than a hundred good drafts can repair.

The Steps

1. Write down, in one sentence, what you want the tool to do for you this month — for example, "first drafts of event announcements" — and keep that list short and specific.
2. Make a two-column note: tasks you will let the tool draft (formats, rewrites, summaries of your own text) and tasks it will never decide (facts, apologies, crisis responses, anything about a named person).
3. Before your next real task, give the tool a practice job using only public, harmless information, and read the result critically, hunting for anything invented.
4. Check the privacy settings and terms of the specific tool you use, and note whether your inputs may be stored or used for training.
5. Choose one human approver — by name — for anything AI-assisted that will be published. If that person is you, say so plainly and build in a pause before posting.
6. Keep a short log of what you used the tool for. It takes one line per task and becomes your proof of careful practice if a question is ever asked.

A Worked Example

Priya runs communications for a small community health nonprofit, alongside managing its front desk. A board member urges her to "let AI write our press releases" to save time. Priya agrees to a trial, but on her terms. She gives the tool her own verified bullet points for a new Saturday clinic: the opening date she confirmed with the clinic manager, the address from the lease, the services listed in the board-approved plan. She asks for a draft announcement in a calm, plain tone. The draft comes back fluent — and includes a quote from the executive director that no one ever said, plus a claim that the clinic will serve "thousands in its first month," a number nobody provided. Priya deletes both, restores her real facts, and shows the board member both versions. The lesson lands better than any lecture: the tool saved her twenty minutes of drafting and would have cost the organization its credibility if she had sent its version. From then on, the nonprofit's rule is hers: AI drafts from our facts, a human checks every line, and no invented quotes, ever.

Common Mistakes

- **Treating fluent writing as verified writing.** Smooth sentences are the tool's easiest trick. Facts, names, dates, and numbers always need a separate check against a real source.
- **Asking the tool for facts about your own organization.** It does not know your organization. It will answer anyway, and the answer may be a blend of other organizations

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with similar names.

• **Pasting sensitive material into prompts.** Unreleased figures, personal details, and embargoed news do not belong in a tool whose storage and training practices you have not verified.

• **Letting the tool set the tone in a crisis.** In a crisis the tool defaults to cheerful corporate language. That mismatch can read as dishonest or uncaring to people who are hurting.

• **Hiding AI use where honesty is expected.** If a publication, funder, or your own policy asks whether material was AI-assisted, answer truthfully. Trust is the product in public relations.

Lesson 2 — Writing Prompts That Produce Usable Drafts

A prompt is the instruction you give the tool. The quality of what comes back depends less on secret tricks than on whether your prompt carries the same information you would give a capable human writer on their first day: what this is, who it is for, what facts it must use, what tone it should take, how long it should be, and what it must not do. Vague prompts produce vague, generic drafts that need so much repair that the tool saved you nothing. Specific prompts produce drafts you can actually edit.

Build every serious prompt from six parts. First, the task: "Draft a media advisory" is a task; "write something about our event" is not. Second, the audience: a release for local parents reads differently from one for trade journalists, and the tool needs to know which. Third, your facts, pasted in full: names spelled correctly, titles, dates, times, places, prices, and the one quote you have actually approved. Fourth, the tone, described in plain words: "calm, plain, warm, no hype" guides better than "professional," which the tool reads as stiff corporate filler. Fifth, the shape: length, format, and structure — for example, "about 150 words, headline plus three short paragraphs, ending with contact details." Sixth, the limits: "Use only the facts I gave you. Do not add statistics, quotes, or claims. If something is missing, leave a bracketed note instead of inventing it." That last instruction — permission to leave a gap rather than fill it — is the single most protective sentence you can put in a prompt.

Work in rounds, not in one giant request. A good rhythm is: draft, then direct. Ask for the first draft. Read it as an editor, not as a fan. Then give one clear round of changes at a time: "Shorten the second paragraph by half." "Replace the word 'exciting' with a plain description of what will happen." "Rewrite the opening for parents, not officials." Each round keeps you in control and shows you exactly where the draft drifts. If a draft is wrong in its bones — wrong angle, wrong tone, wrong audience — do not patch it sentence by sentence. Start again with a better prompt. Editing a fundamentally wrong draft takes longer than re-prompting and teaches you less.

Keep a small prompt library for your recurring work. Most PR work repeats: event announcements, new-hire notes, schedule changes, thank-you posts, monthly updates. For each type, save the prompt that worked, with blanks for the new facts. This does three things. It makes your output consistent, so your organization sounds like one voice across months. It

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makes the work faster, because the thinking about structure and limits is already done. And it makes the work safer for a team, because a colleague using your tested prompt inherits your safeguards — the "use only these facts" line travels with the template instead of depending on each person remembering it under deadline pressure.

One more skill matters: giving the tool your own voice to follow. If you have past announcements you are proud of, paste one or two as style examples and say, "Match the plain, warm tone of these examples." The tool is good at echoing a provided style. Without an example, it defaults to the average voice of the internet, which sounds like nobody in particular and therefore like nobody trustworthy. Your organization's voice — the specific way you greet people, what you never say, the words you always use for your community — is an asset. Feed it deliberately, or watch it get averaged away.

Finally, prompt for options when judgment matters most. Headlines, opening lines, and subject lines benefit from choice: ask for eight options, from straightforward to warm, and pick like an editor. Asking for options also reveals the tool's habits — if all eight options contain hype words you dislike, your limits need strengthening. You are not obliged to use any option as written. Often the best final line is your own edit of two machine suggestions combined, and that is fine. The tool proposes; you dispose.

The Steps

1. Before prompting, gather your verified facts in one place: correct name spellings, titles, dates, times, place, cost, and any approved quote, word for word.
2. Write your prompt with all six parts: task, audience, facts, tone in plain words, shape and length, and explicit limits including "do not invent — leave a bracketed note if information is missing."
3. Paste one short example of your organization's real voice when tone matters, and ask the tool to match it.
4. Generate the draft, then read it once through as a skeptical editor before making any changes.
5. Direct revisions in single, clear rounds — one kind of change at a time — rather than one long list of mixed complaints.
6. If the draft's angle or audience is fundamentally wrong, stop editing and re-prompt with corrected instructions.
7. Save every prompt that produced a good result into a prompt library, organized by task type, for reuse by you and your team.

A Worked Example

Marcus handles publicity for a regional food bank. His first attempt at an AI draft used the prompt "Write a press release about our holiday food drive." The result announced a goal of 50,000 meals — a number the tool invented — named a sponsor the food bank does not have, and opened with three exclamation points. Marcus rebuilt his approach. His new prompt named the task (a 200-word release), the audience (local newspaper readers), the facts (the drive runs

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December 1–20, drop-off at the main warehouse address, the verified goal of 12,000 meals set by the director, and a real quote from a volunteer coordinator that Marcus had taken down by phone), the tone ("plain and warm, no hype, no exclamation points"), the shape, and the limit ("use only these facts; add nothing"). The new draft needed ten minutes of light editing and went out the same afternoon. Marcus saved that prompt as the food bank's drive template. Next year, a new volunteer used it, changed only the facts, and produced a safe draft on her first try — the safeguard traveled with the template, exactly as intended.

Common Mistakes

- **Prompting from memory instead of from verified facts.** If the facts are not in your prompt, the tool fills the gaps from its training patterns, and the gaps are where errors live.
- **Skipping the limits.** Without an explicit "do not add facts or quotes," the tool treats invention as helpfulness. The limit line is not optional decoration.
- **Asking for everything in one mega-prompt.** Drafting, shortening, translating, and writing social posts in a single request produces a tangle you cannot check carefully. One job per prompt, checked, then the next.
- **Accepting the first draft because the deadline is close.** Deadline pressure is precisely when invented details slip through. A two-minute fact check is faster than a correction and an apology.
- **Never saving what worked.** Rebuilding prompts from scratch each time wastes the learning and removes the consistency a library provides.

Lesson 3 — Checking Facts, Voice, and Risk Before Anything Goes Out

Every AI-assisted draft passes through three checks before publication: facts, voice, and risk. This lesson teaches each check as a separate pass, because a draft can pass one and fail another. It can be factually perfect and still sound like a stranger wrote it. It can sound exactly like you and still contain a claim that creates legal or reputational trouble. Professionals check all three, in order, every time — especially when the draft "looks fine," because looking fine is the tool's core talent.

The fact check is mechanical and non-negotiable. Go through the draft with your source material open beside it and verify every checkable item: every name against its correct spelling, every title against the person's current role, every date and day of the week against a calendar, every time, address, price, and deadline against the official record, every number against the document it came from. Watch especially for the tool's favorite inventions: statistics with no source ("studies show 8 in 10 customers..."), quotes attributed to real people, endorsements from organizations that never gave them, awards never won, and "first" or "only" claims nobody verified. A useful habit is the highlight test: highlight every factual claim in the draft, then ask of each one, "Where did I see this, outside this draft?" If the only answer is "the tool wrote it," the claim comes out or gets verified. No exceptions for small claims — a wrong opening time in a community post causes real people to arrive at a locked door.

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The voice check asks whether this sounds like your organization on its best day. Read the draft aloud. AI text often reads smoothly on screen and strangely in the ear: sentences of identical length, repeated sentence openings, and filler phrases like "in today's fast-paced world" or "we are thrilled to announce" stacked three deep. Cut filler ruthlessly. Check that the words you use for your community match the words the community uses for itself — names of neighborhoods, programs, and groups must be exact, because a near-miss reads as not knowing the people you serve. Check warmth and respect: does the draft talk down, over-promise, or use people as decoration? If your organization serves people in hard circumstances, read once more imagining you are the person described. That single perspective shift catches more voice failures than any style guide.

The risk check is the pass most beginners skip and most professionals refuse to. Ask four questions. One: does this draft promise anything — outcomes, timelines, safety, results — that we cannot guarantee? AI loves confident promises; PR survives on promises kept. Two: does it say anything about a named person or another organization that they have not approved or that we cannot prove? Three: does it touch a sensitive area — health claims, money, children, an ongoing dispute, an investigation, a death, a layoff — where a wrong word carries legal weight or deep hurt? Four: is the timing right? A cheerful post scheduled weeks ago can land on the morning of a community tragedy, and the tool will never warn you, because it does not know what happened this morning. Anything that fails the risk check does not get edited into safety by the tool. It goes to a human with authority — your director, your legal adviser where one exists, or the person the statement is about — and it waits for their word.

Disclosure deserves a direct word. Different outlets, funders, and platforms have different expectations about AI assistance, and rules are still developing. The durable principle is honesty proportionate to the claim being made. Routine drafting help on an event announcement is like using spell-check; few audiences need a footnote. Material presented as a person's own words — a signed letter, a personal testimony, a quote — must actually be that person's words, approved by them, or the piece is dishonest regardless of AI involvement. Never use the tool to generate fake testimonials, fake reviews, fake letters of support, or comments that pretend to come from community members. That is not a gray area. It is fabrication, it is discoverable, and it destroys the trust that public relations exists to build.

Keep your checking visible. Save the source facts beside the final draft. Note who approved the piece and when. If a reporter later asks how a figure was reached, you answer from your records in one minute instead of reconstructing under pressure. This paper trail is also how a small team learns: after a month, review which errors the tool repeated — for one team it was dates, for another, inflated numbers — and strengthen your prompt limits in exactly that spot.

The Steps

1. Print or open the draft beside your verified source material — never check from memory.
2. Highlight every factual claim and verify each one against a source outside the draft: names, titles, dates, days of the week, times, places, prices, and numbers.

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3. Delete any statistic, quote, endorsement, award, or "first/only" claim you cannot verify, or verify it properly before publication.

4. Read the draft aloud for the voice check: cut filler phrases, fix repeated patterns, and confirm your community's names and terms are exact.

5. Run the risk check with the four questions: unkeepable promises, unapproved statements about others, sensitive topics, and timing.

6. Route anything sensitive to a named human approver and wait for their decision — do not let the tool edit its way around a risk flag.

7. Save the final version with its sources and the approver's name and date, so questions can be answered from records later.

A Worked Example

Elena coordinates communications for a small arts education charity. The tool drafts a grant-announcement post that reads beautifully. Her fact check finds two problems in thirty seconds of highlighting: the grant amount is stated as $25,000, but the award letter says $20,000, and the funder's name is spelled the way it appears in news articles, not the way the foundation spells it in its own letter. Her voice check catches "underserved youth in the inner city," language her charity never uses — their materials say "young people in our neighborhoods," because that is how the families themselves talk. Her risk check catches the biggest issue: the draft thanks the funder for "renewing their commitment for three more years," but the letter funds one year only. Had that posted, the charity would have publicly committed a funder to money it never promised — a relationship damaged by one unchecked sentence. Elena fixes all three from her sources, sends the corrected draft to her director for the approval note, and posts. The whole check took nine minutes. It protected the charity's money, its funder relationship, and its voice in one pass.

Common Mistakes

• **Checking only the facts you remember doubting.** The tool's errors hide in the details you felt sure about — the day of the week, the middle initial, the room number. Highlight everything, verify everything.

• **Letting the tool "fix" a risk problem.** Asking the tool to soften a legally risky claim produces a differently worded risky claim. Risk decisions belong to accountable humans.

• **Publishing machine-made testimonials or quotes.** An invented quote from a real person is a fabrication even if it "sounds like something they'd say." Only real, approved words go inside quotation marks.

• **Skipping the read-aloud.** Your ear catches robotic rhythm, cold phrasing, and accidental double meanings that your eyes glide over on screen.

• **Checking once and assuming the skill transfers.** Each new draft needs its own three passes. Yesterday's clean draft says nothing about today's.

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Lesson 4 — Media Work: Backgrounders, Pitches, and Preparation Without Spam

Reporters and creators are the audience PR people most fear wasting — and the audience AI tempts people to waste at scale. This lesson covers the media-facing uses where the tool genuinely helps, and draws a hard line at the uses that burn relationships: mass-generated pitches, fake personalization, and follow-up pressure produced by the dozen. The principle is simple. Use AI to prepare better and write shorter. Never use it to contact more people with less thought.

Start with backgrounders. A backgrounder is a one- or two-page document that gives a journalist the verified context behind a story: what your organization is, when it started, whom it serves, key milestones, and where to check facts. The tool is excellent at turning your approved materials — past releases, your annual summary, your own fact sheet — into a clean backgrounder draft in a consistent format. Feed it only your documents, limit it to those documents, then run the full Lesson 3 checks. The result is a document you can send with confidence and reuse for a year, updating the facts as they change. What you must never do is ask the tool to write your background from its own knowledge. It will blend you with similarly named organizations and present the blend smoothly.

Interview preparation is the second high-value use. Paste your own key points and ask the tool to act as a tough but fair reporter: "Ask me ten hard questions a local journalist might ask about this expansion, one at a time." Rehearsing against predictable challenges — cost, impact on neighbors, past mistakes, who benefits — turns a nervous spokesperson into a prepared one. Ask it to identify the weakest claim in your own statement and argue against it. Ask it to summarize a long public document you must respond to — a council report, a regulator's findings — so you can find the three paragraphs that matter, then read those paragraphs yourself in the original before you comment. Preparation help like this carries low risk because nothing the tool says in rehearsal is published. Its errors become practice, not headlines.

Pitches — the short messages inviting coverage — are where discipline matters most. A good pitch is specific to one journalist's actual work: the beat they cover, the audience they serve, and why this story fits both. The tool can help you draft that pitch once you have done the human research: read the journalist's recent pieces yourself, choose the angle honestly, and write down why this person, specifically, might care. Then the tool can tighten your draft, suggest a clearer subject line, or shorten a rambling second paragraph. What it cannot do is manufacture genuine relevance for fifty people at once. If you paste a media list and ask for "personalized pitches," you will get the same pitch with names swapped and a compliment about a recent article the tool may have invented. Journalists recognize this instantly — many now say so publicly — and your organization's name gets filed under "spam" by the very people you need. One thoughtful pitch, human-researched and tool-polished, outperforms a hundred generated ones, and it is not close.

Follow-up follows the same rule. One brief, polite follow-up after a reasonable interval, adding something genuinely new — a confirmed date, a photo offer, an answer to a likely question — is

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professional. A sequence of increasingly urgent generated nudges is harassment with better grammar. Use the tool to draft your single follow-up well, and let silence be an answer you respect. Similarly, thank-you notes after coverage: the tool can draft, but add one specific, true sentence of your own — what their coverage meant to a named program or person — because specificity is the part that cannot be faked and the part journalists remember.

Finally, monitoring and summaries. The tool can summarize a long article, a transcript of your own interview, or a stack of coverage into themes: what was accurate, what was misunderstood, what questions keep recurring. Those recurring questions are gold — they show you exactly what your next backgrounder or statement must explain better. Keep humans as the judges of tone and fairness in coverage summaries, though; the tool flattens nuance and may label fair criticism as negative. Your job is to learn from criticism, not to have it softened by a machine before you read it.

The Steps

1. Build your backgrounder only from your own approved documents, with a "use only these sources" limit in the prompt, then run all three Lesson 3 checks.
2. Before any interview, run a rehearsal session: have the tool ask hard questions one at a time, and answer aloud, in your own words, until the weak spots feel steady.
3. Research each journalist yourself — read two or three recent pieces — and write one sentence on why this story fits their work before drafting any pitch.
4. Use the tool only to tighten a pitch you have already aimed: clearer subject line, shorter paragraphs, plainer language. Never generate bulk "personalized" pitches from a list.
5. Send one thoughtful follow-up at most, and only when you can add something genuinely new. Treat no reply as a reply.
6. After coverage appears, summarize it with the tool's help, note recurring questions, and feed those questions into your next backgrounder update.
7. Keep a simple record of who was pitched, when, and the outcome, written by you — relationships live in records the tool cannot invent.

A Worked Example

David promotes a small maritime museum. A national newspaper's heritage reporter is visiting his region, and David wants to pitch a story about the museum's restored fishing boat, restored largely by teenage volunteers. He does the human work first: he reads the reporter's last four features and notices she always centers the young people in a story and always asks what a project costs and who paid. His pitch draft leads with the teenagers, names the real restoration cost from the museum's accounts, and names the local funder. Only then does he ask the tool to tighten it. The tool cuts forty words and suggests a subject line naming the boat and the teen crew. David sends one pitch. The reporter replies within a day — partly, she later tells him, because the pitch answered her cost question before she asked it. Compare the road not taken: that same week, a larger attraction nearby sent her a generated pitch praising her "recent piece on coastal railways," which she never wrote. She deleted it and told David about it over coffee.

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Preparation beat volume, and the difference was visible to the exact person it needed to impress.

Common Mistakes

- **Generating pitches to a whole media list.** Swapped names and invented compliments are recognizable at a glance and damage your standing with every recipient at once.
- **Asking the tool about a journalist's work instead of reading it.** It may describe articles that do not exist. Your credibility rides on details only real reading provides.
- **Publishing rehearsal answers word for word.** Practice answers are scaffolding. In a real interview, memorized machine phrasing sounds evasive; prepared understanding sounds confident.
- **Automating follow-up sequences.** Repeated generated nudges read as pressure, not professionalism. One good follow-up, then respect the silence.
- **Letting summaries judge coverage for you.** Use summaries to find facts and recurring questions. Judge fairness and tone yourself, especially when the coverage is critical.

Lesson 5 — Building a Simple, Safe Workflow Your Team Will Actually Use

Skills fade without a system. This final lesson turns the previous four into a workflow small enough to survive busy weeks: a short written policy, a prompt library, clear checkpoints, and a monthly review. The goal is not paperwork. The goal is that safe practice happens on your worst, busiest day — the day a statement is needed in an hour — not only on calm days when careful checking feels easy.

Begin with a one-page policy, written in plain language your whole team can understand. It states five things. What the tool may be used for in your organization: first drafts from provided facts, editing, summaries of your own material, rehearsal and preparation. What it may never be used for: inventing facts, quotes, testimonials, or endorsements; writing apologies or crisis statements without senior human drafting and approval; processing personal data about clients, patients, students, or staff. What must never be pasted into it: the sensitive list from Lesson 1, spelled out for your setting. Who approves AI-assisted public material, by name and role, for routine items and for sensitive items separately. And how you answer questions about your use: honestly and briefly, from your records. One page, posted where the team works, beats a forty-page policy nobody opens. Review it twice a year, because tools and rules change.

Next, formalize the checkpoint habit. Every AI-assisted piece, however small, passes three gates, and the gates have names so a busy colleague can say them fast: Facts — checked against sources; Voice — read aloud; Approval — signed off by the named person for that category. For routine items like event reminders, the same person may pass all three gates in five minutes. For anything sensitive, the approval gate belongs to someone else, and the piece waits. Build the gates into your tools where you can: a shared checklist pinned above the desk, a line at the top of your draft template reading "Facts ■ Voice ■ Approved by ___," a rule that

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nothing is scheduled for posting until that line is filled. Systems that live inside the working document survive; systems that live in a separate manual do not.

Choose your tools deliberately and keep the list short. One approved tool, understood well — its privacy settings checked, its quirks known — is safer than five tools used casually. Where a tool offers settings that reduce data retention or exclude your inputs from training, turn them on and record that you did. Where your organization handles especially sensitive work — health, legal aid, children, finance — take advice before using any public tool for anything beyond generic drafting, and consider whether some material should never touch an outside tool at all. That caution is not fear. It is the same professional judgment you apply to any outside service that handles your words.

Train people the way this set taught you: by doing, with real examples. Run one short session where the team watches a draft get checked and sees the invented quote and the wrong figure caught live. That single demonstration teaches more than a memo, because the tool's confidence is so convincing until the moment a fact check punctures it. Give every new team member the prompt library and the one-page policy on day one, and pair their first few pieces with a checker. Make clear that catching an AI error is praised work, never pedantry — the person who spots the wrong date has saved the organization, and saying so builds the culture that keeps standards up when you are not in the room.

Close the loop monthly. Spend twenty minutes reviewing the log you started in Lesson 1: what the tool was used for, what errors were caught, what nearly slipped through, and which prompt needs a stronger limit. Update the library and the policy from what you learn. Also review the outside world briefly: has your tool changed its terms, has a platform or funder issued guidance on AI disclosure, has a mistake by another organization taught a lesson cheaply? Public relations is a reputation kept over years. A small, steady review rhythm is how a team keeps the speed the tool offers without paying for it in trust.

End with perspective. Generative AI will keep changing, and some of today's detailed advice will date. The durable parts of this topic will not: give the tool your facts rather than asking for its, check facts, voice, and risk as separate passes, protect private information absolutely, prepare more and spam less, and keep a named human answerable for every public word. An organization that holds those lines can use each new version of the tool with confidence, because its safety never depended on the tool behaving. It depended on the people checking — and people, trained and systematic, are reliable in the way that matters.

The Steps

1. Write your one-page policy covering permitted uses, prohibited uses, never-paste material, named approvers, and honest disclosure, in plain language.
2. Add the three named gates — Facts, Voice, Approval — to the top of your draft template so no piece can be scheduled until all three are marked.
3. Settle on one approved AI tool, check its privacy and data settings, turn on any reduced-retention options, and record what you set.

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4. Run one live demonstration for your team: draft, check, and catch real errors together, and praise the catching explicitly.

5. Give new team members the policy and prompt library on their first day, and pair their early pieces with an experienced checker.

6. Hold a twenty-minute monthly review of your usage log: errors caught, near misses, prompt fixes, and any changes in tool terms or outside guidance.

7. Update the policy and library from each review, and date every version so your practice history is visible.

A Worked Example

Grace manages a two-person office for a regional housing charity — herself and an assistant, Tomas, who started in spring. After a near miss in which a draft newsletter carried a wrong phone number for the charity's advice line, Grace builds the workflow in one afternoon. The one-page policy goes on the wall. The draft template gains its three-gate header. Tomas's first newsletter under the system takes fifteen minutes longer than the old way — and the gates catch the tool quietly "updating" the advice line's opening hours to the hours of a different charity with a similar name, an error neither of them would have spotted in a skim because the hours looked plausible. By autumn, the monthly reviews have strengthened two prompt limits, the library holds nine tested templates, and when a funder asks, in a routine questionnaire, how the charity governs its use of AI, Grace answers in one paragraph with dates and names. The funder's feedback singles that answer out as a reason for confidence. The workflow cost an afternoon and twenty minutes a month. It returned accuracy, a trained colleague, and documented trustworthiness — the whole currency of public relations.

Common Mistakes

- **Writing a long policy nobody reads.** If the policy does not fit on one page in plain words, it will not be open on the desk during a deadline. Short and used beats long and filed.
- **Relying on memory instead of gates in the document.** Under pressure, everyone believes they checked. The three boxes at the top of the draft make checking visible and undeniable.
- **Letting tool choice sprawl.** Every additional tool is another set of terms, settings, and habits to govern. One tool, well understood, is the safer default for a small team.
- **Treating error-catching as criticism.** If people hide near misses to avoid blame, the monthly review starves and the same error returns. Praise the catch, fix the prompt.
- **Building the system once and never reviewing it.** Tools change their terms and your work changes its risks. The monthly twenty minutes is what keeps the system true.

Try It

Choose one real, low-risk piece of communications work from your coming week — an event announcement, a schedule update, or a thank-you post — and produce it using the full method in this set. Start by gathering your verified facts in writing: every name, date, time, place, and

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figure from its real source, plus one short example of your organization's voice. Build a six-part prompt with explicit limits, including the instruction to leave bracketed gaps rather than invent. Generate the draft, then run the three gates slowly: highlight and verify every factual claim, read the piece aloud and cut the filler, and answer the four risk questions honestly. If another person is available, hand them the draft and the sources and let them check it fresh — note what they catch that you missed. Save the prompt that worked into the start of your own prompt library, with a one-line note about what the check caught. Finally, write three sentences for your log: what the tool did well, what it got wrong, and what limit you will add next time. You have now done, once and completely, the exact workflow that makes generative AI a safe drafting partner instead of a risk with good grammar — and you have the records to prove it.

Fortress shares what I learned, not professional advice. General info only, not legal / HR / financial advice.

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