



Community College

Small Business Center at Enka

Presents:

Using AI to Improve Profits and Efficiencies in Your Small Business

AI Essentials for Business Workshop Series Handout

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30-60-90 Day AI Implementation Roadmap

Building AI Capability One Step at a Time

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AI Implementation Roadmap

Building AI Capability One Step at a Time

HOW TO USE THIS ROADMAP

Three months. Three phases. Each one builds on the last. Don't skip ahead — the foundation you build in Days 1-30 determines how well the rest lands. Track your results as you go. The numbers matter more than the milestones.

DAYS 1-30: THE FOUNDATION | Goal: Prove AI works with one successful use case

Week 1 — Choose and Test

- Complete your AI Quick Win Worksheet and identify ONE repeatable task that takes 15 or more minutes each time
- Pick a task that involves writing, research, or summarizing — these are where AI delivers the fastest wins
- Write your first prompt using the formula: who you are + who reads it + what you need + how it should look
- Test it three times. Refine after each attempt. The third version will be noticeably better than the first
- Note what works and what still needs your hand

Week 2 — Measure and Refine

- Track actual time saved. Be honest with the numbers — this is your baseline
- Compare AI output quality to your normal work. Is it good enough to send with light editing?
- Adjust your prompt based on real results, not first impressions
- Use AI for this task consistently — daily if it comes up that often
- Write down any unexpected benefits or friction points

Week 3 — Document and Train

- Create a one-page guide for your team: how to use AI for this specific task
- Include your refined prompt and one or two example outputs
- Train one team member in a 30-minute session. Watch them use it
- Catch confusion before it becomes habit — their questions improve your prompt
- Check: is the output clear enough that someone else could run this without you?

Week 4 — Calculate and Share

- Add up total hours saved in the first month
- Convert hours to dollar value using your team's hourly rate or your own billable rate
- Share the results with your team. People adopt faster when they see it working
- Decide: is AI delivering enough value to expand? If yes, move to Phase 2
- Celebrate the win. You just successfully implemented AI in your business

SUCCESS METRIC

One task is consistently faster with AI, at least one team member is trained and using it independently, and you have a real number for time saved.

DAYS 31-60: THE EXPANSION | Goal: Scale to 3-5 use cases across your team

Week 5 — Identify the Next Use Cases

- Ask your team directly: what takes too much time each week?
- Look for patterns. Do multiple people handle similar tasks? That's your highest-leverage target
- Choose 2-3 new tasks. Start with the easiest wins — save the complex ones for Phase 3
- Apply what you learned from your first use case. The second prompt takes half the time to get right
- Add each new prompt to a shared document. This is the start of your Prompt Library

Week 6 — Train and Deploy

- Run 30-minute training sessions for 2-3 employees. Each person owns one specific AI task
- Have them test it with you in the room first. Catch problems early
- Set up a simple feedback channel — a group chat, a weekly check-in, or a shared notes doc
- Check in daily for the first week. Quick problems become slow habits if you don't catch them

Week 7 — Build Your Prompt Library

- Create a shared document your whole team can access and search
- For each proven prompt: document what it does, include a working example, note common adjustments
- Keep it current. A prompt library that's out of date gets ignored
- Assign someone to maintain it. It doesn't have to be you — it just has to be someone
- Review the Safe Data Checklist with every team member who uses AI tools

Week 8 — Measure and Adjust

- Survey your team: what's working, what's not, what do they wish AI could do?
- Calculate total hours saved across all AI tasks in this phase
- Document what didn't work — and why. That's valuable too
- Double down on what's delivering. Drop what isn't without second-guessing
- Decide whether paid AI tools are worth it based on actual ROI, not enthusiasm

SUCCESS METRIC

3-5 tasks are running with AI, multiple team members are using it independently, and you have a working Prompt Library your team actually references.

DAYS 61-90: THE SYSTEM | Goal: Make AI a standard part of how your business operates

Week 9 — Build the Routine

- Add "AI wins this week" as a standing item in team meetings. Two minutes — enough to make progress visible
- Discuss problems openly. When something doesn't work, solve it as a team
- Create a simple process for suggesting new AI use cases. People closest to the work spot the best opportunities
- Assign an AI champion — someone who stays curious and keeps the team's skills current

Week 10 — Clarify Where Humans Win

- List the tasks in your business where AI consistently falls short: client relationships, judgment calls, one-off problems with no pattern, managing and motivating your team
- Recognize employees who excel at these skills. Make those capabilities visible
- Shift how you describe roles to emphasize judgment and relationships, not task completion
- Track how employees are spending the time AI has freed up. That's your proof augmentation is working

Week 11 — Scale Thoughtfully

- Look at departments or roles not yet using AI. Could they benefit from what you've already built?
- Build AI tool orientation into your onboarding process for new employees
- Update your SOPs to reflect AI-assisted workflows where they've become standard
- Evaluate paid or industry-specific AI tools based on ROI — not novelty

Week 12 — Measure Impact and Plan Forward

- Calculate total hours saved over 90 days
- Calculate total cost savings: hours multiplied by hourly rate
- Document quality improvements beyond time: faster client responses, greater consistency, fewer errors
- Survey your team: how has daily work changed? What would they not want to give up?
- Set your AI goals for the next quarter based on what the data actually shows

SUCCESS METRIC

AI is integrated into daily operations, team members proactively suggest new use cases, and you have clear ROI data that proves the investment was worth it.

Key Principles

- ✓ **Start with one task and prove it.** Trying to do everything at once produces nothing. One use case done well builds more momentum than five done halfway.
- ✓ **Measure time, not activity.** How many times you used AI doesn't matter. How many hours you recovered does. Track the number.
- ✓ **Train your team — adoption doesn't happen automatically.** A 30-minute training session per person is a small investment against weeks of avoided friction.
- ✓ **When AI doesn't work on the first try, refine the prompt.** The problem is almost always what you asked for, not the tool's capability.
- ✓ **Keep what humans do best at the center.** AI handles the preparation. Your team handles the decisions. That separation is what makes AI a business asset.
- ✓ **Share wins publicly. Address failures privately.** Visible success accelerates adoption. Embarrassing someone for a mistake shuts it down.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- ✗ Starting with too many tasks at once
- ✗ Skipping the measurement step — you need numbers to justify expansion
- ✗ Assuming people will learn on their own without training
- ✗ Abandoning a use case after one failure without diagnosing why
- ✗ Forgetting to acknowledge team progress publicly

This roadmap is a guide, not a contract. Adjust timing based on your team's capacity and comfort level. The goal is not to use AI everywhere — it's to use AI in the right places so your team can focus on the work that only humans can do.

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