

# The AI Hiring & HR Toolkit

50+ Copy-Paste AI Prompts to Hire the Right People, Build a High-Performance Team, and Handle Every HR Situation with Confidence

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*From job post to onboarding — your entire people operation, powered by AI.*

50+ COPY-PASTE AI PROMPTS | 10 CHAPTERS | INSTANT DOWNLOAD

FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS • HIRING MANAGERS • FOUNDERS SCALING THEIR TEAM

### WHAT'S INSIDE THIS TOOLKIT

- **50+ copy-paste AI prompts** across 10 HR chapters
- Job postings that attract top talent (not spray-and-pray applicants)
- Interview question banks with evaluation frameworks
- Offer letters, compensation negotiation scripts, and PIP templates
- 30-60-90 day onboarding plans that get new hires to full productivity fast
- Performance review templates, stay interview scripts, and culture tools
- **BONUS:** The AI-Powered Hiring Decision Framework (5-step system)
- **APPENDIX:** 8 AI hiring tools reviewed with pricing

Works with: **ChatGPT** · **Claude** · **Google Gemini** · **Perplexity** · Any AI assistant

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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|    |                                                 |                  |
|----|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 01 | Writing Job Postings That Attract Top Talent    | 5 prompts        |
| 02 | Screening & Shortlisting Candidates             | 4 prompts        |
| 03 | Interview Questions & Evaluation Frameworks     | 5 prompts        |
| 04 | Making Offers & Negotiating Compensation        | 4 prompts        |
| 05 | Employee Onboarding & The First 90 Days         | 5 prompts        |
| 06 | Performance Management & Reviews                | 4 prompts        |
| 07 | Difficult HR Conversations                      | 5 prompts        |
| 08 | Employee Development & Retention                | 4 prompts        |
| 09 | Policies, Procedures & HR Documentation         | 4 prompts        |
| 10 | Building Culture & Team Communication           | 5 prompts        |
| ★  | BONUS: The AI-Powered Hiring Decision Framework | 5-step system    |
| ■  | Appendix: AI Tools for HR & Hiring              | 8 tools reviewed |

### HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

1. Find the chapter that matches your current situation.
2. Copy the prompt — fill in the **[bracketed placeholders]** with your specifics.
3. Paste into ChatGPT, Claude, or any AI assistant.
4. Review the output, edit for your company voice, then use it.

These prompts are starting points, not scripts. The AI gives you the structure and language — you add the context that makes it specific to your company and situation.

## CHAPTER 01

# Writing Job Postings That Attract Top Talent

Most job postings are job descriptions dressed up as ads — and they repel the candidates you actually want. These prompts help you write postings that sell the role, filter out poor fits from the first line, and attract people who are genuinely excited about what you're building.

### FULL JOB POSTING (ANY ROLE)

Write a compelling job posting for a [Job Title] at [Company Name]. We are a [company size] company in [industry]. Key responsibilities: [list 3-5]. Must-have qualifications: [list 3]. Nice-to-have: [list 1-2]. Compensation: [range or "competitive"]. What makes this role exciting: [culture/mission/growth angle]. Write with energy — lead with what's in it for the candidate, not a dry list of requirements. Keep it under 400 words. Include a short, compelling intro paragraph about the company (2-3 sentences).

### JOB POSTING — REMOTE / FLEXIBLE ROLE

Write a job posting for a remote [Job Title] at [Company]. Highlight the flexibility and autonomy of the role in the opening paragraph. Address common remote worker concerns (communication, culture, equipment) proactively. Include what a typical week looks like. Compensation: [range]. Required time zone overlap: [hours]. Tools we use: [list 3-4]. End with a clear application instruction. Keep it warm but professional.

### JOB POSTING — FIRST HIRE (GENERALIST / SWISS ARMY KNIFE ROLE)

Write a job posting for a small business's first full-time hire. The role is [title or "Operations Associate"]. This person will handle: [list 4-6 mixed responsibilities across departments]. We're a [team size] team at [company] doing [what you do]. Be honest that this is a "wear many hats" role but frame it as an opportunity for someone who wants to build something, not maintain something. Compensation: \$[range]. No corporate jargon — write it like a human.

### KNOCKOUT SCREENING QUESTIONS (3-5 QUESTIONS)

Write 5 application screening questions for a [Job Title] role. The goal is to quickly identify: (1) genuine interest vs. spray-and-pray applicants, (2) [specific skill #1] ability, (3) [specific skill #2] ability, (4) culture/values alignment, (5) communication quality. Make the questions easy to answer in under 100 words each but hard to fake with a generic response. Include one question that reveals how they think, not just what they know.

## JOB POSTING REFRESH (REWRITE AN EXISTING POSTING)

Rewrite this existing job posting to be more compelling and candidate-focused. Original posting: [paste posting]. Problems to fix: too formal/corporate, not showing company culture, leading with requirements instead of opportunity. Rewrite it to lead with what's exciting about the role, cut the requirements list to must-haves only, add a human voice, and include a compelling close. Keep all accurate details but make someone actually want to apply.

## CHAPTER 02

# Screening & Shortlisting Candidates

You have 40 applications and 2 hours. These prompts help you move fast without missing the right person — building a systematic screening process that catches what a resume scan misses.

### RESUME REVIEW FRAMEWORK (EVALUATING A CANDIDATE)

I'm reviewing candidates for a [Job Title] role. The three most important qualifications are: [qual 1], [qual 2], [qual 3]. Here is the resume: [paste resume]. Evaluate this candidate against these three criteria. Rate each: Strong / Adequate / Weak, with a one-sentence explanation for each rating. Then give an overall recommendation: Advance / Maybe / Pass, with a 2-sentence justification. Be direct — I'm making a hiring decision, not writing a performance review.

### PHONE SCREEN SCRIPT (15-MINUTE CALL)

Write a 15-minute phone screen script for a [Job Title] candidate. The call should cover: (1) a 2-minute introduction to the company and role, (2) 3 questions to assess [key skill #1], [key skill #2], and [culture fit factor], (3) a question about their salary expectations and timeline, and (4) an explanation of next steps. Include the actual questions to ask, not just topics. Format as a script I can follow while on the phone — include time markers.

### REJECTION EMAIL (AFTER REVIEW, NO INTERVIEW)

Write a professional rejection email for a candidate who applied for [Job Title] but won't be moving forward. We did not interview them. Keep it: brief (under 100 words), respectful, specific enough to not feel automated (mention the role name), and leave them with a positive impression of our company. No false hope. No "we'll keep your resume on file" unless we mean it. Warm but clear.

### CANDIDATE COMPARISON MATRIX (CHOOSING BETWEEN FINALISTS)

I need to choose between [number] final candidates for [Job Title]. Create a comparison framework I can fill in. Evaluation criteria: [list 5-7 factors that matter for this role — skills, experience, culture fit, growth potential, red flags, etc.]. Format as a table with candidates as columns and criteria as rows. Include a weighted scoring option (I'll assign weights). Add a notes row for qualitative observations. I want to make this decision based on data, not gut alone.

## CHAPTER 03

# Interview Questions & Evaluation Frameworks

The best interview is not a conversation — it's a structured evaluation. These prompts help you ask the right questions, listen for what actually predicts performance, and evaluate every candidate against the same standard.

### BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ROLE-SPECIFIC)

Write 8 behavioral interview questions for a [Job Title] role. Focus on the competencies most predictive of success: [list 4 competencies, e.g., "attention to detail," "handling ambiguity," "customer communication," "cross-functional collaboration"]. Each question should follow the STAR format (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Include 2 follow-up probes for each question that help dig deeper if the candidate's answer is vague. No generic questions — make these specific to the role and the challenges this person will actually face.

### CULTURE & VALUES INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Write 5 interview questions that assess culture and values fit without asking "are you a team player?" or other clichés. Our company values are: [list 3-5 values]. Our culture is [describe in 2-3 sentences — pace, communication style, autonomy level, etc.]. Write questions that surface how candidates actually operate, not how they want to be perceived. Include what a strong vs. weak answer looks like for each question.

### SKILLS ASSESSMENT / WORK SAMPLE TASK

Design a practical skills assessment for a [Job Title] candidate. The assignment should: take no more than [60-90 minutes], test the core skill of [specific skill], be realistic (simulate actual work they'd do), and have a clear evaluation rubric. Write: (1) the assignment instructions to send the candidate, (2) the evaluation rubric (what a strong / acceptable / weak submission looks like), and (3) a note to the candidate about what we're looking for. Keep the ask respectful of their time.

### INTERVIEW DEBRIEF NOTES TEMPLATE

Create an interview debrief template for a [Job Title] hiring decision. I need to capture notes from [number] interviewers and make a consistent decision. The template should include: candidate name, role, interview date, interviewer, overall rating (1-5), ratings on [list 4-5 competencies], key strengths observed, concerns or red flags, evidence-based notes for each competency, hire / no-hire recommendation, and any conditions or caveats. Format for easy reading when comparing multiple candidates side by side.

## REFERENCE CHECK QUESTIONS (FORMER MANAGER)

Write 8 reference check questions for [Candidate Name] who is a finalist for [Job Title]. Questions should be designed for their former manager. Cover: (1) their actual role and responsibilities (verify accuracy), (2) quality of work and output, (3) how they handle feedback and criticism, (4) how they perform under pressure or with competing priorities, (5) their relationship with teammates, (6) any performance concerns or areas for growth, (7) whether you'd rehire them and why, (8) one open question. Include the exact phrasing — reference calls are short and I need to move efficiently.

## CHAPTER 04

# Making Offers & Negotiating Compensation

The offer stage is where great hires are won or lost. These prompts help you extend offers that land, handle negotiation without overpaying, and communicate compensation decisions clearly and confidently.

### VERBAL OFFER SCRIPT (PHONE CALL)

Write a script for a verbal offer phone call to [Candidate Name] for [Job Title]. The offer is: \$[salary], [benefits summary], start date: [date]. The call should: open with genuine enthusiasm (not performative), deliver the offer clearly with all key terms, pause for their reaction, address their likely first question ([anticipated question]), and give them a clear timeline to respond ([days]). Keep it conversational — this is a relationship moment, not a contract reading. Include what to say if they ask for time to think.

### WRITTEN OFFER LETTER (FORMAL)

Write a formal offer letter for [Candidate Name] for the role of [Job Title] at [Company Name]. Start date: [date]. Compensation: \$[annual salary] / \$[hourly], paid [frequency]. Benefits: [list]. Reporting to: [manager title]. Include: a warm opening expressing excitement, all compensation and benefit details, key employment terms (at-will, full-time/part-time, hours), acceptance deadline, and a note about what to bring on their first day. Professional tone. Keep it 1 page. Do not include legal language that should be reviewed by counsel — note where counsel should review.

### COUNTER-OFFER RESPONSE (CANDIDATE NEGOTIATING SALARY)

Write a response to a candidate who has countered our job offer. Our offer: \$[amount]. Their counter: \$[amount]. Our flexibility: [describe — "we can go to \$X," "salary is fixed but we can offer X perk," "no flexibility"]. Write a response that: acknowledges their counter professionally, explains our position without being defensive, presents our best offer clearly, and moves toward a decision. If we're meeting them partway, explain the reasoning. If salary is fixed, offer an alternative (signing bonus, early review, extra PTO). Keep it warm — we want them to say yes.

### RESCINDING AN OFFER (BUSINESS CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGED)

Write a letter rescinding a job offer to [Candidate Name] for [Job Title]. Reason: [business circumstances — e.g., "budget freeze," "role eliminated," "internal restructuring"]. The candidate has not started yet. Write a message that: is honest but not over-explains, expresses genuine regret, acknowledges the inconvenience to the candidate, and — if appropriate — offers any support (severance, reference, keep on file). Avoid legal exposure. Warm, human, and direct.

## CHAPTER 05

# Employee Onboarding & The First 90 Days

The first 90 days determine whether a new hire reaches full productivity — or quietly starts job hunting again. These prompts build the onboarding experience that makes new employees feel set up to succeed from day one.

### PRE-BOARDING EMAIL (BEFORE FIRST DAY)

Write a pre-boarding email to send [New Employee Name] who starts as [Job Title] on [start date]. The email should: welcome them warmly, set expectations for day one (arrival time, who to ask for, parking/access), tell them what to bring, preview their first week schedule, introduce them to the team by including a brief bio of their manager ([Manager Name], [title, fun fact]), and include one "we're excited for you" note that feels authentic. Keep it under 300 words. Excited tone, no corporate stiffness.

### 30-60-90 DAY ONBOARDING PLAN

Create a 30-60-90 day onboarding plan for a new [Job Title] at [Company]. Their background: [2-sentence summary]. Key responsibilities: [list]. Their manager: [name/title]. Design three phases: Days 1-30 (learn, observe, build relationships), Days 31-60 (start contributing, take ownership of first tasks), Days 61-90 (operate independently, identify improvements, deliver first measurable result). For each phase: list 5-7 specific activities or milestones, name who owns each, and define what "success" looks like at the end of the phase. Make it practical, not aspirational.

### FIRST WEEK SCHEDULE (DAY-BY-DAY)

Write a first week schedule for [New Employee Name] starting as [Job Title] on [date]. Include: Monday (orientation, system setup, meet the team), Tuesday through Friday (mix of training sessions, 1:1s with key people, job shadowing, first small tasks). Format as a calendar table. For each block include: time, activity, who's involved, and the goal/outcome. Keep the first day lighter — they're absorbing a lot. Build to more independence by Friday. Include a end-of-week check-in on Friday afternoon.

### NEW HIRE CHECK-IN (END OF WEEK 1)

Write a 15-minute end-of-week-1 check-in script for a manager to use with a new hire [Name] who started as [Job Title]. The check-in should: (1) invite them to share first impressions without leading them to a positive answer, (2) ask what's clicked and what's still confusing, (3) ask if they have everything they need to succeed, (4) preview week 2, and (5) reaffirm why we hired them. Include specific questions, not just topics. The goal is to catch problems early and make them feel heard.

## TRAINING DOCUMENTATION PROMPT (CAPTURE YOUR PROCESSES)

Write a structured training document for the task: [describe the task — e.g., "processing a customer refund in our POS system"]. This document is for a new [Job Title] who has no prior experience with our systems. Include: (1) when to do this task, (2) what you'll need (tools, access, information), (3) step-by-step instructions numbered and clear enough to follow without asking questions, (4) common mistakes to avoid, (5) what to do if something goes wrong. Format for easy scanning — use numbered steps, bold key actions, and short sentences. Assume zero prior knowledge.

## CHAPTER 06

# Performance Management & Reviews

Performance management doesn't have to be the thing everyone dreads. These prompts make reviews clear, actionable, and actually useful — for managers who want to develop their people, not just document their performance.

### ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW (WRITTEN EVALUATION)

Write an annual performance review for [Employee Name], [Job Title], for the period [date range]. Their key responsibilities were: [list]. Their standout accomplishments this year: [list 3]. Areas where they met expectations: [list 2]. Areas for growth: [list 1-2]. Overall rating: [Exceeds / Meets / Below Expectations]. Write a balanced, evidence-based evaluation — specific accomplishments with context, not vague praise. For growth areas, include a concrete development suggestion. Avoid discriminatory language. Keep it 400-600 words — substantive but not overwhelming.

### PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

Write a Performance Improvement Plan for [Employee Name], [Job Title]. The performance concern is: [describe clearly — e.g., "consistently missing deadlines on client deliverables," "customer complaint pattern over past 60 days"]. The PIP should include: (1) a clear description of the performance gap, (2) the standard expected going forward, (3) 3-5 specific measurable goals to be achieved in [30/60/90] days, (4) the support the company will provide, (5) the consequence if goals are not met, (6) check-in schedule. Firm but fair tone. Not punitive — this should be something an employee can realistically succeed at.

### GOAL-SETTING CONVERSATION PREP (QUARTERLY OKRs)

Help me structure a 30-minute quarterly goal-setting conversation with [Employee Name] who is a [Job Title]. Company priorities this quarter: [list 2-3]. Their role in those priorities: [describe]. Last quarter's results: [brief summary]. Write: (1) 3-4 discussion questions to open the conversation and get their input on priorities, (2) a framework for setting 2-3 SMART goals together, (3) what to cover to ensure alignment on success metrics, and (4) how to close with clear ownership. I want this to feel collaborative, not top-down.

### RECOGNITION & POSITIVE FEEDBACK MESSAGE

Write a recognition message for [Employee Name] who did [specific thing — e.g., "closed the Acme account ahead of deadline," "resolved a difficult customer situation independently," "trained two new team members while carrying a full workload"]. The message should: be specific enough to feel earned (not generic), explain WHY this matters (impact to the team, customer, company), and express genuine appreciation. Can be used as: a Slack message, email, or read aloud in a team meeting. Keep it under 100 words — genuine > lengthy.

## CHAPTER 07

# Difficult HR Conversations

The conversations you avoid are the ones that cost you most — in team performance, in culture, and eventually in turnover. These prompts give you the words for the situations most managers dread.

### TERMINATION SCRIPT (WITH CAUSE)

Write a termination meeting script for dismissing [Employee Name] from [Job Title]. The reason for termination: [describe — e.g., "continued performance issues after a PIP," "violation of company policy," "position elimination"]. The meeting will have: HR/witness present. Cover: (1) clear, direct statement of the decision in the first 30 seconds, (2) brief explanation of the reason (1-2 sentences — not a debate), (3) logistics (last day, final paycheck, benefits end date, return of company property), (4) next steps for the employee, (5) how to close the meeting. Include what NOT to say. Script for a 10-15 minute meeting. Do not include legal language that requires counsel review — note where counsel should review.

### DISCIPLINARY WARNING (VERBAL — DOCUMENTED)

Write a verbal warning script for addressing [Employee Name] about [issue — e.g., "repeated tardiness," "unprofessional communication with a colleague," "failure to follow safety procedures"]. The conversation should: state the specific behavior clearly without attacking character, explain the impact on the team/business, state the expected standard going forward, confirm they understand and have opportunity to respond, and outline what will happen if the behavior continues. Include what to document afterward (in case this escalates). Script for a 10-minute private conversation. Firm but professional.

### ADDRESSING CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO EMPLOYEES

Help me prepare for a mediation conversation between two employees — [Employee A] and [Employee B] — who have a conflict around [brief description of conflict]. My role as the manager: neutral facilitator, not judge. Write: (1) individual pre-meeting talking points for each employee (what to say to each privately before the joint session), (2) the joint session structure (opening, ground rules, each party shares, identify the core issue, agree on forward path), (3) 3-4 questions to ask that move from blame to solutions, and (4) how to close with a clear agreement and accountability.

### RESIGNATION ACCEPTANCE & TRANSITION PLAN

Write a response to [Employee Name]'s resignation from [Job Title]. Their last day is [date]. Include: (1) a warm acceptance of their resignation that respects their decision, (2) a brief note of appreciation for their contributions, (3) a transition plan outline (knowledge transfer tasks, final deliverables, handoff documentation), (4) logistics (final pay, benefits, return of equipment, exit interview offer), and (5) a genuine offer to stay connected and serve as a reference. Tone: gracious, professional, no passive aggression even if the timing is difficult.

## SALARY DISCUSSION (DENIED RAISE REQUEST)

Write a script for a conversation where I need to deny a raise request from [Employee Name]. They requested \$[amount] / [% increase]. We cannot approve it because: [reason — "budget constraints," "below market for role," "performance hasn't reached the threshold"]. The conversation should: acknowledge and validate their request, be honest about the reason (without over-explaining), describe what they need to do / what needs to change for compensation to be reconsidered, and give a clear timeline for re-evaluation. Leave them feeling respected and with a path forward — not dismissed.

## CHAPTER 08

# Employee Development & Retention

Replacing an employee costs 50–200% of their annual salary. These prompts help you invest in the people you have — building the skills, clarity, and connection that make great employees stay.

### CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK

Help me prepare for a career development conversation with [Employee Name], [Job Title], who has been with us [tenure]. What I know about their goals: [what they've mentioned or what I observe]. What the company needs from this role going forward: [describe]. Write: (1) opening questions to understand their 1-3 year aspirations, (2) a framework to identify skill gaps between where they are and where they want to go, (3) 3-4 development options to discuss (training, stretch projects, mentorship, new responsibilities), and (4) how to close with a concrete 90-day development action. This should feel like a conversation about their future, not our needs.

### LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT PLAN (INDIVIDUAL)

Write a 6-month individual learning and development plan for [Employee Name], [Job Title]. Their goal: [development objective — e.g., "become ready for a manager role," "improve technical skills in X," "develop client presentation skills"]. Current skill level: [brief description]. Resources available: [budget, tools, courses, mentors]. Plan should include: 2-3 specific learning objectives, recommended learning resources for each (with format — course, book, project, coaching), monthly milestones, and a success metric at the 6-month mark. Make it achievable alongside their current workload.

### STAY INTERVIEW (PROACTIVE RETENTION CONVERSATION)

Write a stay interview script to run with [Employee Name] who is a high performer in [Job Title]. A "stay interview" is a proactive conversation to understand what keeps someone engaged — and what might cause them to leave — before they hand in their notice. Questions should cover: what they enjoy most about their current role, what frustrates or drains them, whether they feel challenged and growing, what would make them consider leaving, and what we could do better as a company. Include 8-10 questions. Tone: genuinely curious, not performative. This is about listening, not convincing.

### PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENT (INTERNAL)

Write an internal announcement for [Employee Name]'s promotion from [Old Title] to [New Title]. Their effective date is [date]. Key facts about their tenure and contributions: [list 2-3 specific accomplishments]. Their new responsibilities: [brief description]. Write an email from [your name/title] to the team. Tone: celebratory but professional. Acknowledge their hard work specifically. Brief mention of what they'll be taking on. Invite the team to congratulate them. Under 200 words.

## CHAPTER 09

# Policies, Procedures & HR Documentation

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The documents you don't have are the risks you're carrying. These prompts help small businesses build the HR foundation they need — without paying a lawyer to draft every policy from scratch.

### EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK SECTION (ANY POLICY)

Write the [Policy Name — e.g., "Remote Work Policy," "PTO Policy," "Social Media Policy," "Anti-Harassment Policy"] section for a small business employee handbook. Company name: [name]. Industry: [industry]. Team size: [number]. The section should include: policy purpose (why this exists), scope (who it applies to), specific guidelines and expectations, any required procedures, and what happens if the policy is violated. Tone: clear and professional but not intimidating. Assume employees read this to understand expectations, not to find loopholes. Note where legal counsel should review before finalizing.

### JOB DESCRIPTION (INTERNAL, NOT A JOB POSTING)

Write a formal internal job description for [Job Title] at [Company]. This document is for HR records and compensation benchmarking — not a job posting. Include: job summary (2-3 sentences), department and reporting structure, primary responsibilities (8-12 bullet points using action verbs), required qualifications (education, experience, skills), preferred qualifications, physical requirements if any, and classification (full-time/part-time, exempt/non-exempt). Use HR-standard language. This document should be accurate enough to use for a compensation band review.

### HR COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST (NEW HIRE)

Create a new hire HR compliance checklist for [State/Jurisdiction]. New employee name: [name]. Start date: [date]. Role: [title]. The checklist should cover: federal requirements (I-9, W-4, FLSA classification confirmation), state-specific requirements (state tax withholding form, new hire reporting, required notices), company documents (offer letter, confidentiality/NDA, employee handbook acknowledgment, direct deposit, emergency contact), benefits enrollment, equipment setup, and first-day logistics. Format as a checkbox list with owner (HR, IT, Manager) and deadline for each item. Note: this is a framework — confirm current state requirements with counsel or an HR professional.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION DOCUMENTATION (WRITTEN RECORD)

Write a disciplinary action documentation template for the following situation: Employee: [Name], [Job Title]. Date of incident or behavior: [date]. Description of the issue: [describe specifically and factually]. Prior warnings (if any): [describe or "none"]. Action taken: [verbal warning / written warning / final warning / suspension]. Expectations going forward: [specific, measurable behavior expected]. Consequences if behavior continues: [be specific — up to and including termination]. Employee acknowledgment section: [signature + date, with note that signature indicates receipt, not agreement]. Keep factual and objective — no emotional language or character judgments.

## CHAPTER 10

# Building Culture & Team Communication

Culture isn't a ping-pong table — it's the daily experience of working in your company. These prompts help small business owners communicate with intention, build team cohesion, and create the environment where great people want to stay.

### ALL-HANDS MEETING AGENDA & TALKING POINTS

Write an agenda and talking points for a [duration]-minute all-hands meeting with [team size] employees. Context: [what's happening at the company this quarter — wins, challenges, changes]. Topics to cover: [list 3-5 items — e.g., Q1 results, new product launch, team update, culture initiative]. Format: agenda with time blocks, plus talking points (not a script — bullet points for each section) that I can speak from naturally. Include a 5-minute Q&A section. Open with something that acknowledges the team's work specifically. Close with a clear statement of where we're headed and why it matters.

### COMPANY VALUES (DRAFT FROM SCRATCH)

Help me draft company values for [Company Name]. We are a [description] company. Our best employees share these traits: [list 4-6 qualities you observe in your top performers]. What we're NOT: [list 2-3 things that would be culture misfits]. Our mission: [one sentence]. Draft 4-6 company values. For each: a short name (2-3 words), a 1-sentence definition, and 2-3 concrete behaviors that demonstrate this value in practice. Avoid generic corporate values (Integrity, Excellence, Innovation). Make them specific enough that a hiring manager could evaluate a candidate against them in an interview.

### MANAGER'S 1:1 MEETING FRAMEWORK

Create a weekly 1:1 meeting framework for a manager to use with direct reports. Meeting duration: 30 minutes. The framework should cover: (1) their wins and progress since last meeting (5 min), (2) current blockers or challenges (10 min), (3) one development-focused topic per meeting (10 min — rotate through: feedback, career, skill-building), (4) upcoming priorities and alignment (5 min). Write specific prompt questions for each section that the manager can use as a starting point. Include a rotating 1:1 topic calendar for the development section (Month 1: feedback, Month 2: career goals, etc.).

### EMPLOYEE SURVEY (ENGAGEMENT CHECK)

Write a 10-question employee engagement survey for [Company Name]. We want to understand: how employees feel about their role, their manager, the company direction, their growth opportunities, and whether they'd recommend working here. Include: 7 rating-scale questions (1-5 or 1-10) and 3 open-text questions. Write questions that will surface real signal — not just confirmation of what we want to hear. Include instructions to make it anonymous. Questions should be clear enough that a non-HR professional can interpret the results and take action. Also include 2 optional demographic questions (tenure range, department) for segmentation.

## TEAM MEETING RETROSPECTIVE (WHAT'S WORKING / WHAT'S NOT)

Write a retrospective meeting format for a small team of [size] who have just completed [project or quarter]. The retro should be 45-60 minutes and cover: what went well (keep doing), what didn't work (stop doing), what we'd do differently (start doing or change), and 3 specific action items with owners. Include the facilitator's script — how to open, how to gather input (consider anonymous input methods for honest feedback), how to prioritize what comes up, and how to close with accountability. Keep it energizing, not just a complaint session.

★ BONUS

## BONUS: The AI-Powered Hiring Decision Framework

### What it is

A structured 5-step process to make consistent, bias-resistant hiring decisions using both data and judgment — designed for small business owners who are hiring without a dedicated HR team.

### Step 1: Define the role before you post

Before writing a job posting, answer these three questions in writing:

- (1) What are the 3 most important things this person will do in their first 90 days?
- (2) What does a great outcome look like at the 6-month mark?
- (3) What would make this hire a mistake? (Define the disqualifiers.)

Prompt: 'I am hiring a [Job Title]. The three most important outputs in the first 90 days are: [list]. The 6-month success metric is: [describe]. This hire would be a mistake if: [list disqualifiers]. Help me write a job posting that attracts candidates who can deliver these outcomes and filters out candidates who can't.'

### Step 2: Score on the same criteria

Every candidate gets evaluated on the same 5-7 criteria — not vague impressions. After each interview, each interviewer completes the debrief template from Chapter 3 before the debrief meeting. This prevents the first impression from anchoring the group's evaluation.

### Step 3: Reference checks are not optional

Reference checks reveal what resumes hide. The most important reference is the former direct manager. Ask them: 'On a scale of 1-10, how enthusiastically would you rehire this person?' Then ask them to explain their number. Anything below an 8 is a yellow flag. Reluctance to answer is a red flag.

### Step 4: Make the decision with a deadline

Set a decision deadline before you start interviewing. Declare it to your team: 'We will make an offer by [date] or restart the search.' Endless deliberation costs you candidates and momentum. If you can't decide, define what additional data you need to collect — then collect it.

### Step 5: Onboard like you mean it

The hiring decision isn't done when the offer is signed. It's done at the 90-day mark. Use the onboarding plan from Chapter 5. Schedule the Week 1 check-in before their first day. Assign a 'first friend' — a peer (not their manager) they can ask the questions they're embarrassed to ask their boss.

## Appendix: AI Tools for HR & Hiring

| Tool                        | Pricing                | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Workable</b>             | \$189/month            | Best all-in-one ATS for small teams hiring 5–50 people/year. AI job description generator, candidate sourcing from 400M+ profiles, structured interview question suggestions. Strong for teams that want everything in one place. |
| <b>Manatal</b>              | \$15/user/month        | Best value AI screening. Scores every applicant 0–100, enriches profiles with LinkedIn/GitHub data, AI job description builder. 80% of enterprise functionality at 10% of enterprise cost.                                        |
| <b>Breezy HR</b>            | Free / \$157/month     | Best for fast, simple hiring. AI-assisted job postings, automated candidate scoring, one-click distribution to 50+ job boards. Free plan supports one active job — ideal for infrequent hiring.                                   |
| <b>ChatGPT / Claude</b>     | Free / \$20-\$25/month | Your best first drafting tool for all the prompts in this toolkit. Use for job descriptions, interview questions, offer letters, PIPs, and all HR documentation. Claude tends to be stronger for longer, structured documents.    |
| <b>Notion AI</b>            | \$10/member/month      | Build your HR knowledge base: onboarding docs, process SOPs, policy library, interview notes. AI features generate and summarize documents. Strong for teams that centralize documentation in Notion.                             |
| <b>Loom</b>                 | Free / \$12.50/month   | Record async video walkthroughs for training documents — far more effective than written docs alone for process training. New hires can re-watch. Managers save time. Free plan covers most small team needs.                     |
| <b>Greenhouse (via Gem)</b> | Custom pricing         | Enterprise ATS with the best analytics for teams ready to scale their hiring. Overkill for most small businesses but worth noting when you're scaling past 20+ hires/year.                                                        |
| <b>HiringThing</b>          | \$59/month             | Lightweight ATS with AI screening for small businesses on a tight budget. Good middle ground between spreadsheets and full ATS platforms. White-label option for agencies.                                                        |

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