

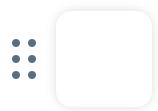
I created this starter kit because nonprofit professionals are being asked to do more with limited time, limited staff, and growing expectations.

AI is not a replacement for judgment, trust, or leadership. But it can help people get out of the blank-page stage, organize their thinking, and move faster on work that already matters.

My goal with this guide is simple: give nonprofit professionals a practical starting point. Not theory. Not hype. Just prompts and workflows that can help you think more clearly, communicate better, and save time.

Start with one prompt. Use it on one real task. Then build from there.

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The Nonprofit AI Starter Kit

Practical Prompts for Nonprofit Professionals Who Want to Lead Better, Save Time, and Think More Clearly

Created by Ryan Clement Consulting

Nonprofit work has always required people to do more than their job description.

You are expected to communicate clearly, manage relationships, prepare for meetings, make decisions with incomplete information, support leadership, understand data, write quickly, and still find time to think strategically.

That is not easy.

Most nonprofit professionals are not struggling because they lack talent. They are struggling because the systems around them create too much noise and not enough time for clear thinking.

That is where AI can help.

AI will not replace judgment. It will not build trust with a donor. It will not understand your organization's culture better than the people living in it every day.

But AI can help you get out of the blank-page stage faster.

It can help you organize your thoughts, pressure-test an idea, summarize messy notes, prepare for a donor conversation, draft a message, or turn scattered information into next steps.

Used well, AI becomes a thinking partner.

Used poorly, it becomes another source of generic content.

The difference is the instruction you give it.

Start With This: Role + Task + Why

Most people get poor results from AI because they ask vague questions.

They type something like:

“Help me write this email.”

Or:

“Make this better.”

That may work sometimes, but it usually creates generic output.

A better prompt gives AI structure.

Use this simple formula:

Role + Task + Why

Role

Tell AI what perspective to take.

Example:

“Act as a senior advancement strategist.”

Task

Tell AI what you need it to do.

Example:

“Help me think through the following issue.”

Why

Tell AI what outcome matters.

Example:

“The goal is to clarify the strategic options, identify risks, and recommend practical next steps.”

Put together, the prompt becomes:

“Act as a senior advancement strategist. Help me think through the following issue: [insert issue]. The goal is to clarify the strategic options, identify risks, and recommend practical next steps.”

That one change makes the response better because AI now understands the role, the work, and the purpose.

This is the same thing good leaders do with people.

You do not hand someone a messy problem and say, “Figure it out.”

You give context.
You explain the goal.
You define what good work looks like.

AI works the same way.

How to Use This Starter Kit

These prompts are not meant to be perfect.

They are starting points.

Copy them. Adjust them. Add your own context. Push back on the response. Ask AI to make the answer more practical, more concise, more strategic, or more direct.

The first response from AI is usually not the final answer.

It is the beginning of the conversation.

That is where people make the biggest mistake. They ask one question, get one response, and decide whether AI is useful or not.

That is not how to use it.

Use AI the way you would use a good colleague.

Give it the situation.

Ask for options.

Challenge the assumptions.

Ask what risks you are missing.

Then use your judgment.

Prompt 1: Strategic Thinking

Use this when you are dealing with an issue that needs more than a quick answer.

Prompt

Act as a senior advancement strategist. Help me think through the following issue: [insert issue]. The goal is to clarify the strategic options, identify risks, and recommend practical next steps.

When to use it

Use this when you are trying to think through:

- A donor strategy
- A staffing issue
- A board concern
- A campaign decision
- A portfolio management problem
- A communication challenge
- A leadership decision

How to make it better

Add the context AI needs.

For example:

- What is the current situation?
- Who is involved?
- What decision needs to be made?
- What has already been tried?
- What are the risks?
- What outcome are you trying to reach?

Follow-up questions

After AI responds, ask:

“What assumptions am I making?”

“What would a strong leader do next?”

“What are the risks of waiting?”

“What is the most practical next step?”

“Rewrite this as a short action plan.”

Prompt 2: Donor Meeting Prep

Donor meetings should not be treated like casual conversations with a hope that something useful happens.

A good meeting has a purpose.

You should know what you are trying to learn, what relationship you are trying to build, and what the next step could be.

Prompt

Act as a principal gifts strategist. Help me prepare for a donor meeting with [donor/prospect]. The goal is to clarify the best engagement strategy, identify discovery questions, and recommend next steps that could lead to a significant gift.

Helpful context to add

- Relationship history
- Giving history
- Known interests
- Capacity indicators
- Recent engagement
- Event attendance
- Board or volunteer connections
- Current proposal or opportunity
- Any known concerns or barriers

Output to request

Ask AI to organize the response into:

1. Meeting objective
2. Likely donor motivations
3. Discovery questions
4. Possible next steps
5. Risks or concerns
6. Follow-up strategy

Responsible use reminder

Do not paste confidential donor information into a public AI tool unless your organization has approved that use.

When in doubt, remove names, addresses, gift amounts, personal details, and anything sensitive.

AI can still help with a de-identified version.

Prompt 3: Foundation Board Update

Board members do not need every detail.

They need the right details.

A strong board update should make progress clear, name the risks, and show where board members can help.

Prompt

Act as a university foundation board advisor. Help me turn the following notes into a concise board update. The goal is to communicate fundraising progress, key risks, and areas where board members can help.

Use this for

- Campaign updates
- Fundraising progress reports
- Pipeline summaries
- Major gift activity
- Board engagement opportunities
- Leadership updates

Better instruction

Ask AI to organize the update into:

1. What has changed
2. Why it matters
3. Key risks
4. Where board members can help
5. Recommended next steps

Follow-up questions

“Make this more concise.”

“Make this sound appropriate for a foundation board.”

“Remove anything that sounds too operational.”

“Add a stronger call to action for board members.”

Prompt 4: Executive Message

Senior leaders need messages that are clear, confident, and useful.

The mistake is trying to sound overly polished. That often makes the message weaker.

Good executive communication should sound direct, grounded, and aware of the audience.

Prompt

Act as an executive communications advisor. Improve the following message for clarity, tone, and strategic impact. The goal is to sound concise, confident, and appropriate for a VP of Advancement.

Use this for

- Internal updates
- Donor-facing messages
- Board communication
- Staff announcements
- Meeting follow-up
- Strategic memos

Follow-up questions

“Make this more direct.”

“Make this sound less corporate.”

“Keep the message professional but more human.”

“Cut this by 30%.”

“Make the next step clearer.”

Prompt 5: Fundraising Strategy

A strategy should be pressure-tested before it becomes a plan.

Too often, nonprofit teams move forward because an idea sounds good in a meeting. But a good idea still needs to survive basic questions.

What is the goal?

Who owns the next step?

What evidence supports the approach?

What could go wrong?

What happens if no one acts?

Prompt

Act as a senior advancement strategist. Pressure-test the following fundraising strategy. The goal is to identify strengths, risks, missing assumptions, and recommended next steps.

Ask AI to review

- The goal
- The audience
- The donor motivation
- The timing
- The internal capacity needed
- The risk of inaction
- The next best step

Follow-up questions

“What is the weakest part of this strategy?”

“What information is missing?”

“What would make this more actionable?”

“What should we do in the next 30 days?”

“What would I need from leadership to make this work?”

Prompt 6: Meeting Notes to Follow-Up Email

Meetings lose value when there is no follow-up.

People leave with different interpretations of what was decided. Next steps are unclear. Ownership gets fuzzy. Then the same conversation happens again two weeks later.

AI can help turn rough notes into a clear follow-up.

Prompt

Act as a nonprofit operations and communications advisor. Turn the following meeting notes into a concise follow-up email. The goal is to summarize key decisions, confirm next steps, assign ownership where clear, and maintain a professional tone.

Ask AI to include

1. Brief opening
2. Key decisions
3. Action items
4. Owners
5. Deadlines
6. Closing next step

Follow-up questions

“Make this warmer.”

“Make this shorter.”

“Make the action items clearer.”

“Turn this into bullet points.”

“Rewrite this for a senior leader.”

Prompt 7: Portfolio Prioritization

A large portfolio is not a strategy.

It is a list.

The work is deciding where attention should go first.

AI can help review portfolio information and identify patterns, but the professional still needs to make the judgment call.

Prompt

Act as a prospect development strategist. Review the following prospect information and help identify which records should receive priority attention. The goal is to evaluate capacity, affinity, engagement, recency, and next-step potential. Explain the reasoning in plain language.

Helpful fields to include

- Prospect stage
- Last contact date
- Giving history
- Largest gift
- Most recent gift
- Open opportunities
- Capacity rating
- Engagement history
- Board or volunteer connections
- Known interests

Ask AI to return

1. Top priority prospects
2. Reason for priority
3. Suggested next step
4. Risk of no action
5. Questions for the fundraiser

Responsible use reminder

Use approved tools and approved data practices.

If your organization has not approved donor data use in AI tools, de-identify the information first.

Prompt 8: Donor Stewardship Message

Stewardship should not sound like a transaction.

It should connect the donor's action to meaning.

AI can help create a first draft, but you still need to add the relationship context.

Prompt

Act as a donor stewardship writer. Draft a warm, concise stewardship message for [donor/prospect] based on the following information: [insert context]. The goal is to express appreciation, connect their support to impact, and keep the relationship moving forward.

Add context such as

- What the donor supported
- Why it mattered
- Any known donor interest
- Recent interaction
- Desired next step
- Tone needed

Follow-up questions

"Make this sound less generic."

"Make this more personal."

"Add a stronger impact statement."

"Make this appropriate for a long-time donor."

"Make this appropriate for a first-time donor."

Prompt 9: LinkedIn Thought Leadership

If you work in nonprofit leadership, your ideas matter.

You do not need to post just to post. But when you have a useful lesson, framework, or observation, AI can help you organize it into something other people can use.

Prompt

Act as a nonprofit content strategist. Turn the following idea into a LinkedIn post for nonprofit professionals: [insert idea]. The goal is to make the post practical, reflective, and useful. Avoid hype, jargon, and generic advice. Include a strong opening line and a clear takeaway.

Good LinkedIn posts usually include

- A clear problem
- A practical lesson
- A real-world example
- A simple takeaway
- A question or next step

Follow-up questions

“Make this sound more like a person with real experience.”

“Make the opening stronger.”

“Cut the generic language.”

“Make this more direct.”

“Give me three different versions.”

Prompt 10: Make AI Sound More Like You

AI often sounds polished but empty.

That is a problem.

People do not build trust with generic language. They build trust when the message sounds clear, useful, and grounded in experience.

Prompt

Act as an editor who specializes in preserving a writer’s voice. Rewrite the following draft so it sounds more like me. Use a direct, practical, reflective tone. Keep the language clear and grounded. Avoid buzzwords, excessive polish, and generic AI phrasing. Make it sound like someone with real experience is explaining what they have learned.

Make this stronger by adding

- A writing sample
- Words or phrases you commonly use
- What you want to avoid
- Who the audience is
- What the message needs to accomplish

Follow-up questions

“Make this less polished.”

“Make this sound more practical.”

“Make this more reflective.”

“Keep my point, but make the structure clearer.”

“Remove anything that sounds like generic AI writing.”

A Better Way to Think About AI

AI is not just a writing tool.

That is where many people start, and that is fine. But the bigger value is decision support.

AI can help you:

- Clarify a messy issue
- Organize your thoughts
- Identify risks
- Draft communication
- Prepare for meetings
- Summarize notes
- Build a first version of a plan
- Ask better questions
- See what you may be missing

The key is not asking AI to think for you.

The key is asking AI to help you think better.

That distinction matters.

Nonprofit professionals already carry the mission, relationships, institutional knowledge, and judgment.

AI should support that work, not replace it.

Responsible AI Use for Nonprofit Teams

Nonprofit work often includes sensitive information.

That may include donor information, student information, client information, employee information, financial information, health information, or internal strategy.

Before using AI, ask:

1. Is this information confidential?
2. Has my organization approved this AI tool?
3. Am I allowed to enter this type of information?
4. Can I remove names and identifying details?
5. Can I describe the situation without exposing private data?
6. Am I using AI to support judgment, not replace it?

A good rule:

When in doubt, de-identify the information.

Instead of using:

“John Smith gave \$50,000 last year and owns a company in Cleveland.”

Use:

“A long-time donor made a significant gift last year, has business ties in the region, and may have capacity for a larger commitment.”

You can still get useful strategy without exposing sensitive information.

How Leaders Should Use This

The leaders who will get the most from AI are not the ones chasing every new tool.

They are the ones who can identify repeatable work.

Ask yourself:

- What task keeps slowing us down?
- What work starts with a blank page every time?
- What meetings create notes but no action?
- What communication takes too long to draft?
- What decisions need better structure?
- What data do we have but rarely turn into action?

Start there.

Do not try to transform the whole organization in one week.

Pick one workflow.

Build trust.

Show value.

Then expand.

That is how adoption happens.

Not through hype.

Through usefulness.

Final Thought

The future of nonprofit work will not be shaped only by who has access to AI.

It will be shaped by who knows how to use it with judgment.

The tool matters.

But the thinking behind the tool matters more.

AI can help nonprofit professionals save time, communicate better, and make stronger decisions. But only when people give it clear direction and stay responsible for the outcome.

That is the work.

Not replacing people.

Not chasing trends.

Building better systems for people who are already carrying important work.





Ready to Build Practical AI Workflows for Your Team?

Ryan Clement Consulting helps nonprofit professionals move from random AI experimentation to practical, repeatable workflows.

The goal is not to chase every new AI tool.

The goal is to help your team save time, improve communication, strengthen decision-making, and focus more energy on the work that moves relationships and revenue forward.

Learn more: ryanclementconsulting.com

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