

// FIELD GUIDE NO. 04

# AI ON YOUR SIDE. FOR \$20 A MONTH.

HOW SHOP OWNERS USE CHATGPT & CLAUDE TO HANDLE ANGRY EMAILS,  
WRITE SOCIAL POSTS, LEARN SOFTWARE, AND SAVE 30 MINUTES A DAY.  
NO HYPE. NO JARGON.

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READ TIME  
8 MINUTES

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08

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# PICK ONE. STOP THERE.

The biggest mistake shop owners make with AI is signing up for five tools and using none of them. You need one. Pick from the four below and pay \$20. That's the whole answer for 9 out of 10 owners.

// TOOL	// PRICE	// BEST AT	// HONEST TAKE
<b>ChatGPT Plus</b>	<b>\$20 / mo</b>	All-purpose writing, Custom GPTs, voice mode, image gen.	<b>The default.</b> Where you start unless you have a reason not to.
<b>Claude Pro</b>	<b>\$20 / mo</b>	Long documents, careful writing, fewer hallucinations.	Better if you'll upload SOPs, warranty docs, or P&Ls.
<b>Perplexity Pro</b>	<b>\$20 / mo</b>	Research with cited sources, competitor lookup.	Worth it as a <b>second</b> tool. Not your first.
<b>Google AI Pro</b>	<b>\$19.99 / mo</b>	Gmail / Docs / Calendar integration.	Get it if your shop already runs on Google Workspace.
<b>365 Copilot</b>	<b>\$21 / user / mo</b>	Outlook, Excel, Word workflows.	Only if you live in Microsoft 365 already.

## THE HONEST ANSWER.

Pick **ChatGPT Plus** or **Claude Pro**. Pay \$20. Cancel everything else for 90 days. You don't need a "stack." You need **one tool you actually open.**

# \$20

// PER MONTH

# THE #1 THING SHOP OWNERS GET WRONG.

Most owners type "write me a Facebook post" into ChatGPT, get back generic slop, and quit. The problem isn't AI. The problem is you didn't tell it anything about your shop. The fix is a one-page Shop Profile.

## AI IS A NEW SERVICE WRITER.

Tell a new service writer nothing — they write a bay-side estimate that says "fix car." Give them the customer history, the symptoms, the warranty policy — they write something a customer pays for.

Same with AI. Write the profile **once**. Paste it into every chat. Or — better — drop it into a Custom GPT (ChatGPT) or a Project (Claude). The AI remembers it forever.

### // WHY THIS MATTERS

Every output the AI produces now sounds like **your shop** — not a corporate template. This is the single thing that separates owners who get value out of AI from owners who quit after a week.

### // SHOP PROFILE · COPY THIS TEMPLATE

NAME: Smith's Auto Service  
OWNER: John Smith, 22 yrs in the bay  
LOCATION: Springfield, MO · pop 170K  
BAYS / LIFTS: 4 bays · 3 lifts  
SERVICES: General repair, brakes, suspension, A/C, diag. NO bodywork or tires.  
ARO TARGET: \$680  
CUSTOMERS: 70% repeat families · 20% small fleet · 10% walk-in  
VOICE: Plainspoken. No jargon. We sound like a neighbor, not a corporate dealer.  
DIFFERENT: 3-yr/36k warranty. DVI w/ photos. Always call before extra work.  
DON'T DO: Hard sell. Scare tactics. Subscription gimmicks.  
REVIEWS: 4.8 ★ · 412 Google reviews

# THE SINGLE HIGHEST-VALUE USE CASE.

Customer sends a 4-paragraph angry email at 9pm. Blood pressure spikes. You want to type "you signed the authorization, learn to read." **Don't.** Run this prompt instead.

## \$20

// 1 ANGRY EMAIL HANDLED RIGHT  
= THIS MONTH'S BILL

## AI IS YOUR COOL-DOWN LAYER.

What you get back is what you would have written tomorrow morning — after you slept on it. This use alone is worth the \$20/month for most shop owners. Forever.

### THE ANGRY-CUSTOMER PROMPT

// COPY THIS

[paste] → ChatGPT or Claude:

"Here's an angry email from a customer. Using my Shop Profile, draft a calm, professional response that (1) acknowledges their frustration without admitting fault, (2) restates the facts neutrally, (3) offers one specific next step. Keep it under 150 words. No apology for things that weren't our fault. Don't sound corporate."

[paste the customer's email below this line]

### THREE MORE VARIATIONS THAT WORK.

- 01 Translate techspeak → customer-speak.** "Rewrite this estimate line for a 65-year-old who doesn't know what a serpentine belt is: [paste line]." You'll get back: "A part that keeps your fan belt tight is wearing out — if we don't replace it, the belt could come off and leave you stranded."
- 02 Spanish translation.** "Translate this SMS into Mexican Spanish for a customer in [your area]. Friendly tone, no DMV formality." Have your Spanish-speaking tech spot-check anything important. Don't use AI translation for legal docs.
- 03 Insurance adjuster pushback.** "Draft a one-paragraph response to this adjuster who's denying [item]. Quote the relevant labor time / parts / procedure. Factual, no emotion."

# SIX PROMPTS THAT CONSISTENTLY WORK.

You don't need a marketing agency for what AI can do in 60 seconds. Run these against your Shop Profile. Pick the best 2 of every 5. Trash the rest. That's how this works.

// PROMPT 01 · POSITIONING

## 10 REASONS TO PICK US OVER THE DEALER.

→ "Using my Shop Profile, give me 10 reasons local customers should pick my shop over the dealership. Skip the obvious ones (price). Focus on what we actually do differently."

// PROMPT 02 · SEASONAL

## 5 SEASONAL SERVICES TO PUSH THIS MONTH.

→ "What 5 seasonal services should I promote in [my city] in [month]? Tell me what the season triggers (AC, snow tires, battery) and a one-sentence hook for each."

// PROMPT 03 · FACEBOOK AD

## 3 VERSIONS OF THE SAME AD.

→ "Write 3 versions of a \$20-off oil change Facebook ad targeted at [working moms / fleet owners / Gen Z first-time car owners]. Different angle each time. 60 words max."

// PROMPT 04 · REFERRAL PROGRAM

## LOYALTY WITHOUT CANNIBALIZING MARGIN.

→ "Help me design a referral program that won't cannibalize my margin. Avg ticket \$680, gross margin 55%. Incentivize repeat customers, not one-and-doners."

// PROMPT 05 · WAITING ROOM

## 10 CHEAP WAITING-ROOM UPGRADES.

→ "Brainstorm 10 cheap ways to make my waiting room more memorable for under \$500 total. We're a family shop, not a luxury dealer."

// PROMPT 06 · DECLINED WORK

## WIN-BACK WITHOUT BEING PUSHY.

→ "Customer declined the \$800 of recommended work. Draft a follow-up text 2 weeks later – not pushy, just a reminder that one item (the [item]) shouldn't wait."

# 14 PROMPTS. SAVE THESE TO YOUR PHONE.

Save these in a Note. Swap the brackets. Run them whenever you need them. These cover roughly 80% of what a shop owner will use AI for in a year.

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## // CUSTOMER COMMS

- 01 **1-star review reply.** "Respond to this Google review without sounding defensive. *Don't offer a refund.* Invite them to call me directly."
- 02 **Ghosted estimate.** "Customer ghosted us after a \$1,400 estimate. Draft a 2-message SMS sequence — one this week, one in 2 weeks. Not pushy."
- 03 **Price defense.** "Customer asks why we charge \$189/hr when the shop down the road charges \$135. Voice-memo script, 60 seconds, my voice."

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## // MARKETING

- 04 **Weekly social plan.** "Write 4 Facebook posts: educational, behind-the-scenes, customer win (no names), light/funny. Under 80 words each."
- 05 **GMB post.** "Write a Google Business Profile post for [seasonal promo] — 150 chars max, ends with a CTA."
- 06 **Monthly newsletter.** "Draft a customer newsletter: tip · staff feature · deal · community. 300 words."

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## // OPERATIONS

- 07 **SOP draft.** "Write an SOP for [intake / brake job / drop-off]. Common mistakes, time per step, what 'done' looks like."
- 08 **Phone greeting.** "Write a 15-second phone greeting. Capture who's calling and why. Books them if it makes sense."

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## // SALES

- 09 **3-tier estimate.** "Help me write Good / Better / Best for [job]. Same outcome, different parts & warranty. One sentence per tier."
- 10 **Upsell justification.** "Customer is questioning a recommended \$400 add-on. Help me explain why it matters in plain English, in person, in under 30 seconds."

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## // HIRING

- 11 **Tech job posting.** "Write a [A-tech / B-tech / lube tech] job posting. Honest about pay, hours, culture. Skip the 'family-owned' clichés."
- 12 **Interview questions.** "10 interview questions that screen for culture fit. Not technical — character."
- 13 **Written warning.** "Help me write a warning for a tech who's chronically late but technically strong. Firm, fair, documented."

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## // LEARNING

- 14 **Learn your software.** Screenshot a screen in Tekmetric, Shopmonkey, or QuickBooks. Drop into ChatGPT. "I'm a shop owner. What does this screen do, when do I use it, what mistakes do new users make?"

# 30 POSTS. 30 MINUTES.

You know you should post more. You don't. AI fixes the staring-at-a-blank-Facebook problem. Three-step workflow that produces a week of content in 10 minutes.

// STEP 01 · IDEAS

## ONE PROMPT = 30 IDEAS.

"Using my Shop Profile, give me a 30-day Facebook/Instagram content plan. Mix educational, promotional, behind-the-scenes, community. One topic per day. Table format."

// STEP 02 · WRITE

## PICK 4. WRITE THEM.

"Turn topic #7 into a 70-word Facebook post. Conversational. Include 1 question to drive comments. No hashtags yet."

// STEP 03 · REPURPOSE

## ONE POST → THREE PLATFORMS.

"Take that post and rewrite three ways: (a) Instagram caption with 5 hashtags, (b) 90-sec TikTok/Reels script with timestamps, (c) Google Business Profile post under 150 chars."

// THE VOICE-MEMO WORKFLOW · TACTICAL GOLD

Driving home from the shop, hit record on the ChatGPT app, ramble for 90 seconds about the brake job you diagnosed. App transcribes. Type: "**Clean this into an 80-word Facebook post in my brand voice. Keep my actual phrasing.**" You sound like you, not AI. Customers can tell.

## WHAT TO NEVER DO WITH AI.

//  
AVOID

- ✘ **Don't diagnose customer cars.** AI is wrong often enough that one bad call costs \$5K in comebacks. It doesn't have your scope, your ears, or 20 years of pattern recognition.
- ✘ **Don't paste customer PII.** Full names + addresses, plates, VINs paired with names, credit cards, SSNs. Scrub before pasting. Especially in free tiers.
- ✘ **Don't trust parts pricing or labor times as final.** Always verify in Mitchell, AllData, or your vendor portal.
- ✘ **Don't write contracts without an attorney.** AI doesn't know your state's lemon law or warranty exposure.
- ✘ **Don't replace tech training with AI.** Send your guys to ASE. AI is for paperwork. Not wrench training.
- ✘ **Don't fake reviews.** Google detects this. FTC fines for it. Career-killer.
- ✘ **Don't auto-reply without reading.** AI sometimes writes things in your voice that you'd never say. Always read.

# TONIGHT. 30 MINUTES.

Do this sequence after the techs leave. By tomorrow you have AI on your side. By next week you've cut 30 minutes a day from the desk work no one wants to do.

## // THE 30-MINUTE SETUP · TONIGHT

- 0-5 MIN **Sign up & pay.** chatgpt.com → ChatGPT Plus \$20. Or claude.ai → Claude Pro \$20. Either works.

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- 5-15 MIN **Fill the Shop Profile.** Use the template on page 03. Save it as a Note on your phone.

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- 15-20 MIN **Save it forever.** In ChatGPT: Explore GPTs → Create → paste profile in Instructions → name it "My Shop Manager." Claude: Projects → New → drop the file.

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- 20-25 MIN **Stash 3 starter prompts** on your phone: angry-customer, social plan, SOP draft.

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- 25-30 MIN **Use one prompt on a real task.** Don't skip this. Owners who succeed try it on day one. Owners who don't, don't.

## // FIRST 7 DAYS · ONE THING A DAY

- DAY 01 Reply to that customer email you've been dreading.

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- DAY 02 Write 4 social posts for the week.

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- DAY 03 Draft an SOP for one thing you keep training the wrong way.

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- DAY 04 Translate one technical estimate line into plain-English customer language.

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- DAY 05 Rewrite your phone greeting and voicemail script.

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- DAY 06 Write a referral program v1.

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- DAY 07 Review the week. What worked? What was slow? Keep what worked. Ditch the rest.

## AI IN YOUR WHOLE SHOP IS COMING NEXT.

The shop management software you use is racing to embed AI directly. Owners who already know how to prompt will get 10x more out of it than owners who waited. Need for Service is built for this.

SEE A  
DEMO →

[needforservice.com  
/demo](https://needforservice.com/demo)