



# AI Basics for Busy Florists

CAMERON PAPPAS / NORTON'S FLORIST / JUNE 16, 2026



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BSBA in Accounting: 2011 Auburn University

Masters of Accountancy: 2012 Auburn University

CPA: 2012-2015

Professional Small Business "Firefighter" : 2015 - Current

***I am not a tech person. I am a CPA turned florist who started using AI to handle the busy work so I could spend more time on the things only humans can do.***

2

RETAIL LOCATIONS

11

YEARS RUNNING NORTON'S



# What we'll cover today.

01

## AI, in plain English

What it is, what it isn't, and why florists keep hearing about it.

02

## Real-world use cases

Specific places AI is already helping my team and other peers teams save time and reduce stress.

03

## Writing better prompts

A simple 4-part formula that makes AI output dramatically better.

04

## Where to start tomorrow

A short action plan you can put to work in your shop this week.

PART ONE

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# Let's talk about AI.

*What it really is, why everyone's talking about it, and what it actually does for a flower shop.*



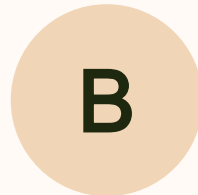
# Where are you with AI today?

*Vote in the poll – there are no wrong answers, and no judgment.*



Never used it

Curious but haven't opened a tool yet.



Tried it once or twice

Played with ChatGPT or Gemini but didn't stick with it.



Use it regularly

Pulling it up most weeks for shop tasks.



# AI is not replacing florists.

*It is freeing them up to be florists.*

## AI HELPS WITH

Thinking. Planning.  
Organizing. Communicating.

*The mental load — not the floral artistry.*

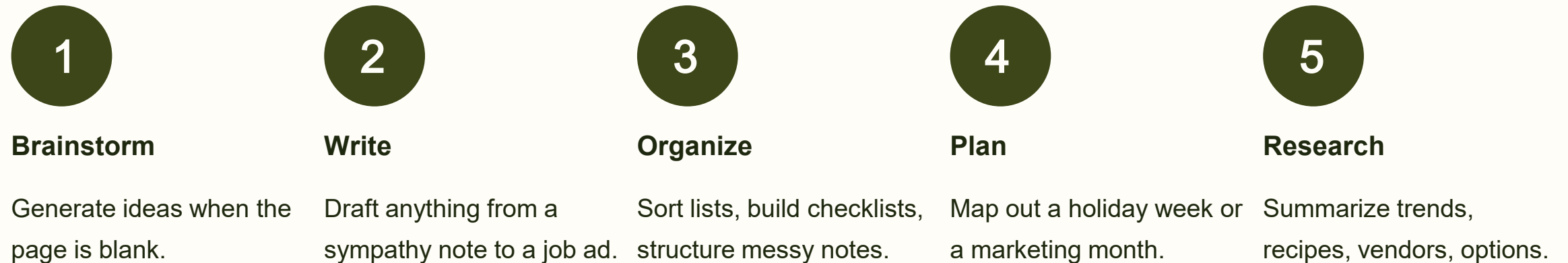
## AI DOES NOT REPLACE

Creativity. Relationships.  
Design Skill.

*The human heart of a flower shop is still yours.*



# Think of AI like a very fast assistant — *that has read most of the internet and works for pennies.*



*It still needs your judgment, your voice, and your final yes.*



# Who are the players?



Best all-around assistant for work and creativity.

\$20/Mo for Plus

\$100 for Pro



Excellent for long documents and careful reasoning.

\$20 Pro

\$100 Max 5x

\$200 Max 20x



Strong integration with Google services and multimodal tasks.

\$4.99 Plus

\$19.99 Pro

\$100 Ultra



Strong for real-time trends and social conversations.

\$30 SuperGrok

\$300 SuperGrok Heavy

DISCLAIMER: I've never opened Grok, and though I use and love Google Workspace, I don't love Gemini.



# In the floral industry:





WHY THIS MATTERS

# Florists make hundreds of tiny decisions every day.

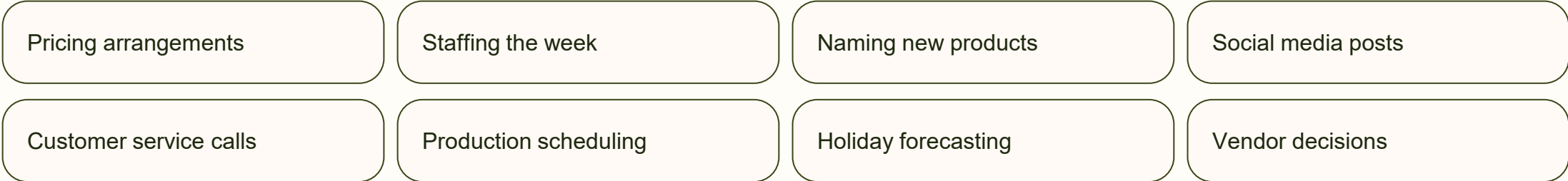
*That mental load is what AI was actually built for.*

Decision

# Fatigue

*is real, and it kills creativity first.*

THE DAY OF A FLOWER SHOP OWNER



PART TWO

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# Real-world use cases.

*Six places AI is already saving florists time, energy, and second-guessing.*



# Product descriptions.

01

*Eliminate blank-page syndrome. AI gives you a starting draft in seconds.*

## HOW FLORISTS USE IT

- Website product copy in your shop's voice
- Sympathy and wedding inquiry replies
- Gift bundle and add-on descriptions
- Seasonal collection write-ups

### TRY THIS PROMPT

"I own a retail flower shop in Birmingham, Alabama. Write a heartfelt website product description for an arrangement called Debby's Delight. It features purple hydrangea, lavender roses, purple stock, veronica, and sword fern in a white ceramic cylinder — our September 'Charity in Bloom' piece, with \$15 from every purchase going to Alzheimer's and dementia research through the Walk to End Alzheimer's. Keep it elegant, compassionate, and community-focused."

Who: Birmingham retail florist

What: Product description for "Debby's Delight"

Context: the flowers, container, charity tie in

Tone & Style: elegant, compassionate, community focused



# Social media planning.

02

*Show up online consistently without burning hours staring at a blank caption box.*

## HOW FLORISTS USE IT

- Built monthly content calendars
- Brainstormed post ideas by category
- Planned seasonal campaigns
- Turned products into marketing moments
- Created caption, Reel, and TikTok prompts

## TRY THIS PROMPT

I run a retail flower shop. Build me a recurring monthly social media content calendar for Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, organized by week and platform with a caption or video idea for each. Mix in product posts, behind-the-scenes videos, flower-care tips, community involvement, holiday reminders, staff features, and fun personality-driven content. Keep the voice friendly and local, not corporate.

- **Who you are** — retail flower shop owner
- **What you need** — a monthly calendar across three platforms, by week
- **Context** — the specific content categories to include
- **Tone & style** — friendly, local, not corporate



# Holiday & production planning.

03

*Organize the chaos of Valentine's, Mother's Day, and Christmas before the chaos starts.*

## HOW FLORISTS USE IT

- Planned Valentine's Day production flow
- Simplified Mother's Day website offerings
- Created capacity and cutoff messaging
- Organized staffing, design, and delivery priorities
- Chose holiday products built for speed and consistency

### TRY THIS PROMPT

I own a retail flower shop with 6 designers. Build me a Valentine's Day production and staffing plan. We're forecasting about 2,200 units — 30% roses, 60% mixed, 10% plants — peaking Feb 13 (~700 orders) and Feb 14 (~1,000), with a daily target of 400–450 arrangements and each designer producing roughly 8 per hour. Give it to me as an hour-by-hour schedule I can hand to my team, with order cutoffs flagged.

**Who you are** — flower shop with 6 designers

**What you need** — a Valentine's production & staffing plan

**Context** — the volume forecast, product mix, peak days, throughput

**Tone & style** — a hand-off-ready hourly schedule



# Customer communication.

04

*Find calm, professional words when emotions are running high — yours or theirs.*

## HOW FLORISTS USE IT

- Late delivery apologies that hold the relationship
- Sympathy wording for hard situations
- Refund and policy explanations
- Wedding & event consultation follow-ups

### TRY THIS PROMPT

I own a retail flower shop. Write a calm, professional email to a customer whose anniversary arrangement was delivered a day late. Acknowledge the mistake, apologize sincerely, and offer to make it right without over-explaining. Keep it warm and human, not corporate.

**Who you are** — flower shop owner

**What you need** — an email reply to an unhappy customer

**Context** — anniversary arrangement delivered a day late

**Tone & style** — calm, warm, sincere, no over-explaining



# SOPs & training.

05

*Get the procedures out of your head and onto the page — so the business doesn't live inside you.*

## HOW FLORISTS USE IT

- Turned rough ideas into clear step-by-step SOPs
- Built training tools for sales, warehouse, and fulfillment
- Created checklists, role guides, and accountability systems
- Made complex processes easier for employees to follow

### TRY THIS PROMPT

I own a retail flower shop. Write a Standard Operating Procedure for a Fulfillment Manager. This person owns order fulfillment from design to delivery — assigning orders to designers, prioritizing timed deliveries, coordinating with the buyer on inventory, managing route changes, and running QC at both design completion and route pull. Every ticket should carry the designer's name, and if QC fails, it goes back to that designer rather than the manager fixing it. Lay it out as clear, numbered steps an employee could follow without me in the room.

- **Who you are** — flower shop owner
- **What you need** — a Fulfillment Manager SOP
- **Context** — the role's duties plus your QC and accountability rules
- **Tone & style** — numbered, employee-ready steps



# Leadership & hiring.

06

*Bring structure to people decisions so you can lead clearly even when the shop is loud.*

## HOW FLORISTS USE IT

- Job descriptions that actually attract florists
- Interview questions for designers & drivers
- 30/60/90-day expectations for new hires
- Performance review and feedback scripts

## TRY THIS PROMPT

"I own a retail flower shop and I'm hiring a Customer Service Specialist. Write me a job description and a matching performance scorecard. The role covers answering phones, processing web orders, and assisting customers, and I want to evaluate on customer satisfaction, order accuracy, product knowledge, scripting and upselling, communication, problem resolution, adaptability, attendance, work ethic, reminder calls, and FlowerClique training progress. Make it specific and measurable, so expectations are clear before the person is even hired.

- **Who you are** — flower shop owner, hiring
- **What you need** — a job description + performance scorecard
- **Context** — the duties and the criteria you'll measure
- **Tone & style** — specific, measurable, expectations up front

PART THREE

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# Getting better results.

*Two small habits that turn generic AI output into work that actually sounds like you.*



# Better prompts get better results.

GENERIC

"Write me a social media post."

*Vague in, vague out. You get something that could be for any business in the world.*

BETTER

"I own a flower shop in Birmingham, Alabama. Write a warm Facebook post promoting summer flowers for busy moms. Keep it conversational, not salesy, under 100 words, and end with a soft call to order."

*Specific in, specific out. AI now sounds like it actually knows your shop.*



# The 4-part prompt formula.

*Tell the AI four things, in plain English, every single time!*

01

Who you are

---

*"I am a retail florist in Birmingham, Alabama."*

02

What you need

---

*"Write me five Mother's Day promotional captions."*

03

Context

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*"Most of our buyers are sons and grandkids."*

04

Tone & style

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*"Warm, sincere, never salesy. Short enough for Instagram."*

*Detail in, quality out. The more specific you are, the better the result.*



# AI still needs your judgment.

*Four rules I follow in my shop — keep these in mind from day one.*

-  Do not paste in **private customer information**.  
*Names tied to addresses, sympathy details, complaint specifics — keep them off public AI tools.*
-  Do not upload **sensitive employee data**.  
*Pay rates, performance issues, personal info — generic policies are fine, real people are not.*
-  Do not trust the output **blindly**.  
*AI will sound confident even when it's wrong. Always read it before sending or posting.*
-  Do not let AI **make decisions** for you.  
*Hiring, pricing, sympathy responses — use it to think, but you make the call.*

Highly Recommended - Adjust security settings to NOT share!!!

Treat AI like a smart assistant, not the boss.



# Start here tomorrow.

*Three small tasks. Pick one, pick all three — just open a tool and start.*

01

Write one product description.

Pick a current arrangement on your site.  
Ask AI to write a warm, 75-word description  
in your voice. Edit, post, done.

02

Generate 10 social posts.

Ask for ten Instagram or Facebook ideas  
for the upcoming month. Schedule the  
three you like and keep the rest in a folder.

03

Draft one tough email.

Late delivery, missed sympathy details,  
refund request — ask AI for a calm,  
empathetic reply. Make it sound like you,  
then send.

ONE LAST THING

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AI doesn't replace the  
human touch.

*It protects the people delivering it.*

QUESTIONS?



Handouts are available at:  
[www.FTDi.com/FTDUniversity/WebinarMaterials](http://www.FTDi.com/FTDUniversity/WebinarMaterials)

Webinar recording will be available to view at:  
[www.YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork](http://www.YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork)

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