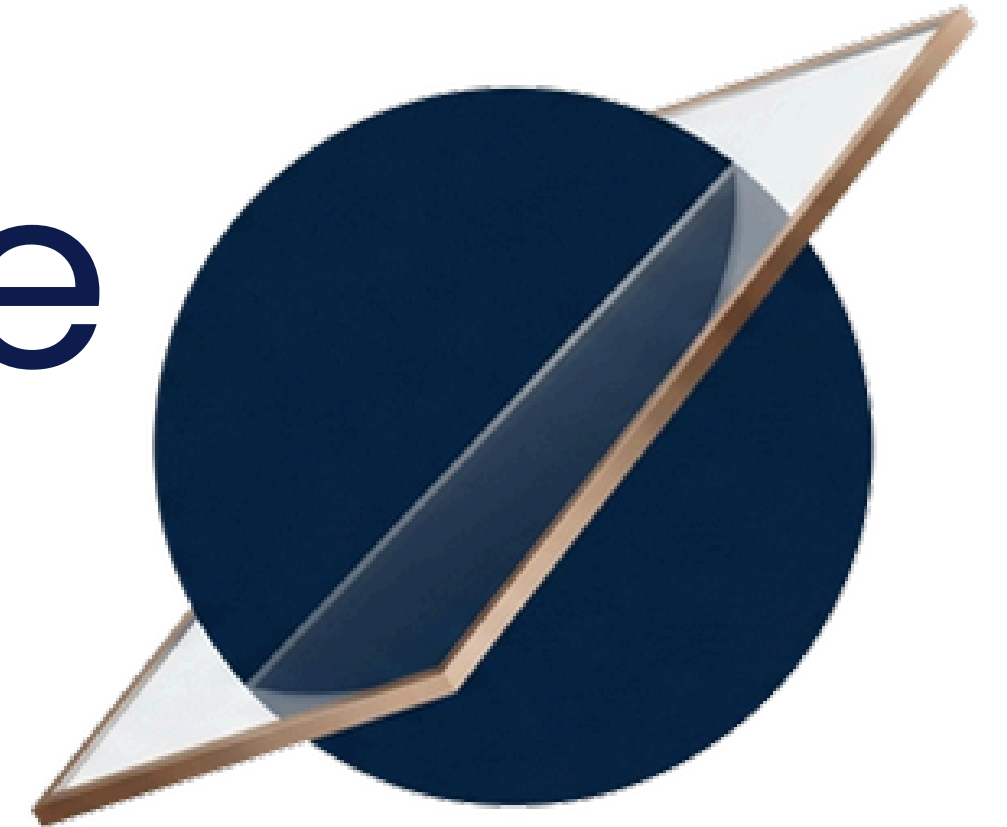


AI for Executives: The Prompting Edge

Moving from understanding AI to using it with strategic precision.

Session 2



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Background

Jennifer Surujpaul- Founder, IT Solutionist

- Digital Transformation Consultant
- AI & Governance Advisor
- Board-Level Technology Strategy
- Former Senior Leader in Education & IT
- Global Strategist – Classlink



Where We Left Off

Session 1 established the mindset. Session 2 builds the skill.

The Myth vs Reality

AI is not just an efficiency tool — it is a thinking companion with immense strategic value.

The Iceberg

Most organisations float on the surface (emails, summaries). Leaders access what lies below: strategic modelling, risk mapping, cognitive offload.

The Quality of Thinking

AI reflects your thinking. Better questions = better outputs.

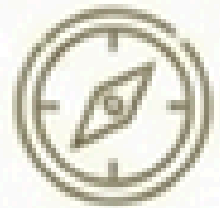
From Command to Partnership

One-sentence commands produce generic output. Role assignment, context and strategic framing unlock real intelligence.

Implementation Plan: The Next 30 Days

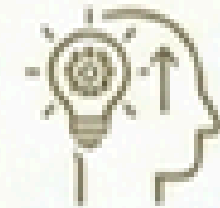


Key Takeaways



Strategy

AI is not the strategy; it is a thinking companion.



Mindset

Move from 'Tool' to 'Partner'.



Behaviour

Behaviour change must precede technical transformation.



Culture

Leadership modelling determines the organisational culture.

What is a Prompt — Really?

It is not a search query. It is a brief to a highly capable colleague.

A Search Query

You type keywords. You get results. The machine retrieves.

Google mindset

A Command

You give an instruction. You get a response. One direction.

Tool mindset

A Brief

You set a role, give context, define a goal. You get a thinking partner.

Companion mindset

The shift from command to brief is where executive value begins.

The 5S Prompting Framework

A structure you can use for any strategic prompt. Referenced in Session 1 – Prompt Framework .

S

Setup – Setting the Scence

Assign a role. Tell AI who it is in this conversation.

"Act as an experienced HR Director..."

S

Situation – Specific in instructions

Provide the context, background and constraints.

"We are a 500-person organisation undergoing restructuring..."

S

Specifics – Simplify your Language

State the exact task with precision.

"Identify the top 5 people risks in this plan..."

S

Style – Structure the Output

Define tone, format and length.

"Respond in bullet points. Executive tone. No jargon."

S

Score – Share feedback, what needs to be changed

Ask AI to rate its own confidence and flag assumptions.

"Rate your confidence 1–10 and note any gaps in my brief."

Novice vs Advanced Prompting

Both use AI. Only one uses it strategically.

NOVICE PROMPT

"Generate a list of evidence-based strategies to address the problem of low staff engagement."

- ✗ No role assigned — AI picks one at random
- ✗ No context about your organisation
- ✗ No definition of what 'good' looks like
- ✗ Output will be generic best-practice list
- ✗ Could have been found via Google

ADVANCED PROMPT

"Ask me questions one at a time to help me think through the staff engagement issue in the attached document. Your task is to help me identify potential organisational impacts and realistic implementation strategies — not generic ones."

- ✓ AI becomes a thinking partner, not an answer machine
- ✓ Socratic questioning surfaces your own insight
- ✓ Context-specific — attached document grounds the response
- ✓ Iterative — builds understanding turn by turn
- ✓ This is cognitive leverage in action

The Myth

A good prompt is a long
prompt.
More words = better output.

MYTH

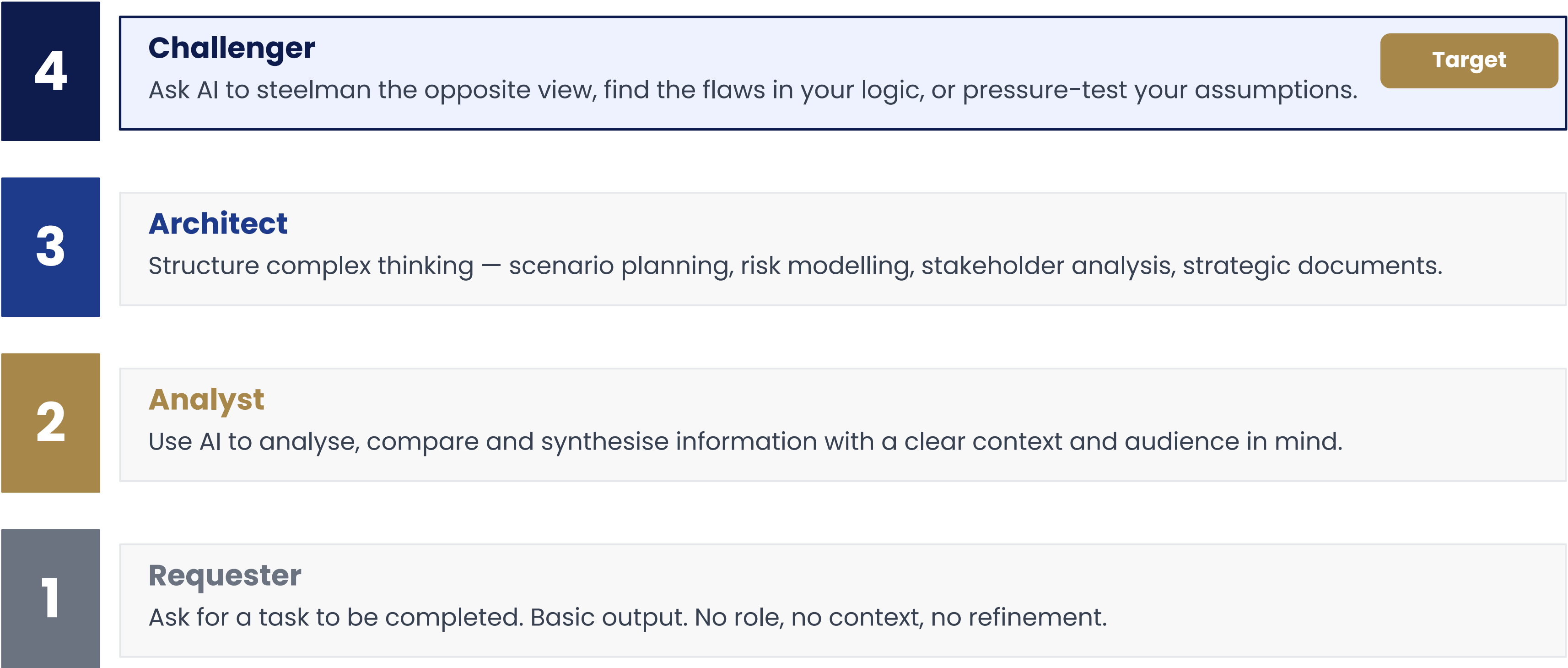
The Reality

Clarity beats length. A well-structured 3-sentence prompt with role, context and expectation will outperform a rambling paragraph every time.

FACT

The Prompting Ladder

Where do you sit today? Where do you want to be?



Most executives arrive at Level 1–2. Session 2 moves you to Level 3–4.

Let's See It Live

Same scenario. Three different prompts. Three very different outcomes.

Scenario: Your organisation is considering a significant restructure. You need to think through the risks before presenting to the board.

Prompt 1 — Requester

"What are the risks of restructuring?"

→ *Generic list. Could be from any textbook.*

Prompt 2 — Analyst

"We are a 400-person education trust considering restructuring our central services. What are the key risks I should consider before presenting to the board?"

→ *More relevant. Still one-directional. No role assigned.*

Prompt 3 — Challenger

"Act as a risk consultant. Ask me questions one at a time to surface the key risks in our proposed restructure. When you have enough context, provide a structured risk assessment with likelihood and impact ratings."

→ *Strategic. Socratic. Produces genuine insight. This is Partnership Mode.*

Case Study

From Overwhelmed to Strategic Clarity

Yiota is an Acupuncturist and Chinese herbalist. A small business owner, not a technologist.

NO.1

She didn't use AI to automate tasks.
She used it as a thinking partner.

NO.2

Before AI:

She held ideas in her head.
Decision-making felt heavy.
Business planning felt overwhelming.



NO.3

AI didn't give her intelligence.
It created thinking space.
It slowed her down strategically while accelerating clarity.
She described it as:
'I no longer think alone.'
For executives, that is powerful."

Case Study

What Yiota's Prompting Actually Looked Like

Yiota — Acupuncturist & Chinese herbalist. Small business owner, not a technologist.

BEFORE

"Help me with my business."

→ Vague. No context. Generic output.

AFTER

"Act as my business strategist. I am a solo acupuncturist with 6 years of experience. I feel overwhelmed by business decisions and struggle to prioritise. Ask me questions one at a time to help me build a 90-day business clarity plan."

NO. 1

She used it as a thinking partner, not a task automator.

NO. 2

AI slowed her down strategically while accelerating her clarity.

NO. 3

"I no longer think alone." — This is the executive advantage.

Your Turn — Hands-On Activity

30 minutes. Real scenarios. Real AI. Real refinement.

1

Choose Your Scenario (3 min)

Pick one from the list below that maps to real work you do this week.

2

Write a Novice Prompt (5 min)

Don't overthink it — write the first prompt that comes to mind and run it.

3

Upgrade Using 5S (10 min)

Rewrite using Setup, Situation, Specifics, Style, Score. Run it. Compare outputs.

4

Go Socratic (7 min)

Change your prompt to: "Ask me questions one at a time to help me think through [your issue]." Note what happens.

5

Share & Debrief (5 min)

What was the biggest shift between Prompt 1 and Prompt 3?

Scenarios: Board risk briefing | Staff survey analysis | Policy impact assessment | Strategic plan stress-test | 90-day priority setting

Debrief



What shifted when you assigned AI a role?



What did Prompt 1 miss that Prompt 3 surfaced?



Where did the Socratic approach feel most valuable?



What concerns came up, accuracy, over-reliance, governance?



Where in your organisation's decision-making could this be applied immediately?

Executive Reflection

What is the most valuable thing AI could help you think through, that you are not currently using it for?

What would change if your leadership team prompted at Level 4 instead of Level 1?

What governance guardrails does your organisation need to put in place before scaling AI-assisted decision making?

Human-First Thinking

AI amplifies your thinking. It cannot replace it.



Judgement stays with you

AI can model scenarios and surface risks. The final call and accountability belongs to the leader.



Governance precedes adoption

Before scaling AI in decision-making, define what it can and cannot be used for, thinking about replacing professional judgement. Policy clarity enables confidence.



Culture is set from the top

How you prompt is what your team will learn to do. Leadership behaviour defines organisational norms.



Start slow to go fast

Yiota's lesson: AI slowed her down strategically while accelerating clarity. Depth over speed.

Key Takeaways



Framework

The 5S prompt structure gives you a repeatable approach to any strategic AI conversation.



Precision

Clarity beats length. A focused, well-structured prompt outperforms a paragraph of instructions.



Partnership

The Socratic prompt — asking AI to question you — is where cognitive leverage becomes real.



Leadership

Human judgement, governance and culture determine whether AI creates strategic value or just noise.

Implementation Plan: The Next 30 Days

Day 1	Day 7	Day 15	Day 30
<p>Today</p> <p>Run the same prompt you wrote today using the 5S framework on a real decision. Compare the output to what you got before.</p>	<p>This Week</p> <p>Replace 3 transactional prompts with Socratic prompts in your daily workflow. Note what surfaces.</p>	<p>Week Two</p> <p>Teach the 5S framework to one colleague or team. Use a real organisational scenario.</p>	<p>Month End</p> <p>Identify one strategic decision in the next term /quarter that you will use AI to stress-test before presenting it.</p>



Commitment: Write your Day 1 prompt now, before you leave the room.

"AI will not replace leaders.
But leaders who think with AI
will shape the future differently."

Jennifer Surujpaul

IT Solutionist

Contact for Strategic Audit