

AI in Practice

Tools & Checks

A short, opinionated list of the tools I actually use, and the questions worth asking before any of them touch your business.

These are not rankings. Every tool here is one I have used on real work. I have no commercial relationship with any of them and receive nothing if you sign up. Where I have not tested something, it is not on this list.

Two workflows that give back the most hours

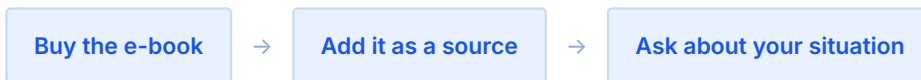
If you only take two things from this document, take these. Neither requires a project, a budget or an IT department. Both work on the principle that matters most: the model answers from material you gave it, not from memory.

A one-hour podcast in five minutes



The point is not the summary. The point is that you can ask **the one question you actually care about**. What did they say about pricing? Did they mention the regulation? What would this mean for a company our size? All without listening to fifty-five minutes you do not need.

Turn the books you buy into something you use



A business book answers general questions. A book loaded as a knowledge base answers **your** question: how would this framework apply to a twelve-person company in the UAE? The gap between reading a book and applying it is where most of the value is lost. This closes it.

Why this matters more than the tool you pick

The single biggest driver of reliable output

- ✓ **Answering from documents you provided.** The model can point to the source. You can check it in seconds.
- ✗ **Answering from memory.** Confident, fluent, and occasionally invented, with nothing to check it against.

What I use, and for what

Eight jobs, not eighty tools. Most weeks I use three of these. The rest earn their place a few times a month, which is exactly the right ratio.

THE JOB	WHAT I USE	WORTH KNOWING
Working with your own documents	Claude Projects NotebookLM	Set up one project per recurring task, each with its own instructions and source files. NotebookLM is free and answers only from what you upload.
Research and fact-finding	Perplexity	Built for retrieval with citations. Still check the sources: a real link can be attached to a claim it does not support.
Recordings into knowledge	TurboScribe + any model	Transcribe first, then ask questions of the transcript. Works for calls, webinars, interviews and video.
Meetings	Sembly	Useful, but check the EU rules on page 5 before switching features on for European staff.
Connecting your systems	Make (n8n, Zapier)	Start with one process that runs weekly and annoys someone. Not with a company-wide plan.
Voice and audio	ElevenLabs	Audiobooks from existing text, voice agents, narration. Quality is now close to indistinguishable.
Images and short video	Gemini	Strong for presentation visuals and short clips without a design brief or a stock licence.
Your visibility in AI answers	Three prompts + Search Console	See page 4. Costs nothing and takes ten minutes.

One change worth noticing

Twelve months ago this needed a developer

- Connecting two of these tools to each other used to mean an integration project. Today you describe what you want and the model builds the connection itself. That shift, from **answering** to **doing**, is the real story of the past year.

What does AI say about your company?

Fewer than one in three Google searches now ends in a click. Increasingly, your customer reads an AI answer instead of visiting your site. These three prompts tell you where you stand. Run each one in ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity. The answers differ.

PROMPT 1 · DO THEY KNOW YOU EXIST?

"What do you know about [company name] in [city]? Include what they do, where they are based, and which sources you are using."

Checks whether you appear at all, and whether what appears is still true. Outdated addresses and discontinued services are the most common finding.

PROMPT 2 · DO THEY RECOMMEND YOU?

"Who are the best [your category] in [your city]? Give me five options and say why you chose each one."

The harder test. If you are absent here, your competitors are being recommended in conversations you never see.

PROMPT 3 · WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT YOU?

"Is [company name] a good choice for [your service]? What are the strengths and the concerns?"

Shows the tone attached to your name and, more usefully, which sources the model treats as authoritative about you.

Two things that make the test meaningful

Otherwise you are testing your own history, not your visibility

- 1 Use a temporary or logged-out chat.** If the model remembers your past conversations, it already knows your company. Your customer's model does not.
- 2 Note the sources, not just the answer.** AI recommendations are not invented. They are assembled from directories, reviews, press mentions and forums. Those sources are what you can actually influence.

Five questions worth asking first

None of these are technical. All of them are cheaper to answer before a project than after one.

- 1 Where does the data actually live?**
Which country, which provider, and is it used to train anyone's model. Ask for it in writing.
- 2 Who approves the output before a client sees it?**
If the answer is "nobody", you have not built an assistant. You have built an unsupervised employee.
- 3 What does the system do when it does not know?**
The single most important question on this page. "It guesses" is a project from two years ago. "It flags it and stops" is a project for today.
- 4 Who is accountable when it is wrong?**
Not the vendor. Courts have been consistent on this: the professional who filed the work is responsible for it.
- 5 Does the EU AI Act reach you?**
It follows your entities and your customers, not your office address. A UAE company with an EU subsidiary or EU clients should assume it applies.

Meeting assistants: what changed in the EU

Relevant to anyone recording calls with staff or clients in Europe

- ✓ **Transcription, summaries and action items.** Analysing what was said is not emotion recognition, because it is not based on biometric data.
- ✗ **Inferring mood or emotion from an employee's voice.** Prohibited in the workplace under Article 5 of the EU AI Act. In force since 2 February 2025, not a future deadline.
- ! **Tell people.** Since 2 August 2026, transparency obligations apply immediately to all systems in scope, regardless of when they were put on the market.

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Figures cited in the accompanying talk are drawn from SparkToro, Sistrix, Pew Research Center, Stanford RegLab and published vendor documentation. Regulatory notes reflect the position as of August 2026 and are general information, not legal advice. Check your own exposure with counsel.