UNITED BROTHERS OF LOS ANGELES

THE AI CHEAT CODE

A Builder's Playbook

AI for Work, Business, and Ownership: A Plain-English Guide and Prompt Library

Los Angeles Edition | weareubla.org

We don't teach Black men to survive. We equip them to thrive.

How to Use This Playbook

Artificial intelligence is the biggest shift in how work gets done in a generation, and it cuts both ways for Black men: our jobs face some of the highest automation exposure in the economy, and at the same time a solo founder with AI tools now does the work of a small team. Sixty percent of the founders who launched businesses in 2025 used AI to do it (Gusto). This playbook makes sure you are on the building side of that line. Part One gives you the foundation in plain English. Part Two is a prompt library: copy a prompt, replace the brackets with your details, and put the tool to work. It has grown: school, the promotion track, and your personal life are in there now. Parts Three through Five map the certifications, the launch path, and your rights. Part Six covers the newest shift, AI agents: software that does not just answer you, it acts for you. The tools will keep changing. The method will not: learn the tools, get certified, build and own.

PART ONE

The Foundation, in Plain English

An AI assistant is a program trained on enormous amounts of text and images that predicts good responses. It writes, summarizes, calculates, codes, brainstorms, and drafts at a speed no team can match. It also makes mistakes with total confidence, repeats biases in its training data, and knows nothing about your life that you do not tell it. Treat it like a brilliant, tireless intern: fast, useful, and supervised by you.

The three starter tools. A chat assistant for writing, planning, and analysis, which is where ninety percent of the value lives. An image tool for flyers, logos, and social posts. And the automation built into tools you already use, your email, documents, and bookkeeping apps, which quietly drafts, sorts, and summarizes in the background. Master the chat assistant first.

The golden rules. One: verify anything that matters, because confident and wrong is its favorite failure mode. Two: never paste what you would not publish: no passwords, no

financial account numbers, no one else's private information. Three: you are the editor. Its draft is raw material. Your judgment, your voice, and your name are the finished product.

The 20-minute rule. Skill with these tools compounds like money. Twenty minutes a day of real practice on real tasks, your resume, your budget, your business idea, will put you ahead of most of the workforce within a season. Consistency is the whole secret, same as everything else in this house.

PART TWO

The Prompt Library

A prompt is just instructions. Specific beats clever: tell the tool who you are, what you want, what good looks like, and what to avoid. Copy these word for word, swap the brackets, and iterate. Asking a follow-up is not failure. It is the job.

For the Job Hunt, the Tailored Resume.

"Here is a job posting: [paste it]. Here is my experience: [paste your resume or a list of your jobs and wins]. Rewrite my resume bullets to match this posting's language honestly, using strong action verbs and numbers wherever I gave them. Flag any requirement I do not meet and suggest how to address it."

For the Job Hunt, the Interview Rehearsal.

"Act as a tough but fair hiring manager for this role: [paste the posting]. Interview me one question at a time. After each of my answers, tell me what landed, what was missing, and how a stronger answer sounds."

For Your Money, the Budget Builder.

"I take home [amount] a month. My fixed bills are [list them with amounts]. Build me a monthly budget that pays the bills, builds a [amount] emergency fund within [timeframe], and leaves room to live. Show me the three biggest leaks you see and one fix for each."

For Your Business, the One-Page Plan.

"I want to start a [type of business] in Los Angeles serving [customers]. Draft a one-page business plan: the offer, the customers, pricing, startup costs, the first three marketing moves, and the biggest risk with a plan for it. Ask me up to five questions first if anything essential is missing."

For Your Business, the Week of Content.

"My business is [describe it]. My customers are [describe them]. Write seven social media posts for this week: two educational, two that build trust, two that sell softly, one that invites people to [your event, shop, or booking page]. Match this tone: [paste a post you like]."

For Learning Anything, the Patient Tutor.

"Teach me [topic] as if I am smart but brand new. Use plain English, one Los Angeles-flavored example per idea, and check my understanding with one question before moving on. If I use a term wrong, correct me kindly and keep going."

For Civic Power, the Ballot Decoder.

"Here is the text of a ballot measure: [paste it]. Explain in plain English what a yes vote does, what a no vote does, who supports and opposes it and why, and what it would cost. Do not tell me how to vote."

For School, the Study Coach.

"Here is what I am studying: [paste your notes or the chapter]. Do not hand me answers to copy. Coach me like a tutor: ask me one question at a time, let me try first, correct me when I am wrong and explain why, and at the end quiz me with five questions and tell me what to review again."

For School, the Test Prep Partner.

"I have a test on [subject] on [date]. Here is the study guide: [paste it]. Build me a study plan between now and the test: short daily sessions, flashcards for the hardest terms, and a practice quiz each session that gets harder as I improve."

For the 9-to-5, the Promotion Case Builder.

"I want to be promoted to [role] within [timeframe]. Here is what I have done this year: [list projects, wins, and numbers]. Turn this into a one-page promotion case: my results in business language, the work I already handle at the next level, and the three gaps I should close before I ask, with a plan to close each one."

For the 9-to-5, the Review-Ready Self-Evaluation.

"Here is my job description: [paste it]. Here are my wins, saves, and projects this year: [list them]. Draft my self-evaluation: lead with measurable results, name two growth areas honestly along with what I did about them, and end with the goals I want for next year."

For the 9-to-5, the Meeting-to-Moves.

"Here are my notes from a meeting: [paste them]. Turn them into: the decisions made, who owns what, every deadline mentioned, and the questions still open. Then draft the short follow-up email I should send to lock it all in."

For Your Business, the Follow-Up That Gets Answered.

"A customer asked about [product or service] and then went quiet. My business is [describe it]. Write a short follow-up message that is warm, not pushy: remind them what they wanted, add one helpful detail, and give them one easy next step."

For Your Life, the Dating Profile, in Your Voice.

> *"Help me write an honest dating profile. About me: [your work, your interests, what your weekends actually look like, what you are looking for]. Write three versions: one confident, one warm, one with humor. Use only what I gave you, do not invent adventures I have not had, and make it sound like a man talking, not an advertisement."*
>
> **For Your Life, the First Message Coach.**
>
> *"I matched with someone whose profile says [paste the public parts of her profile]. Draft three opening messages: one that speaks to something specific in her profile, one light and funny, one straightforward. Keep them short, respectful, and in my voice. No pickup lines, and nothing I would be embarrassed to have read out loud."*

PART THREE

The Certification Map, Los Angeles

Prompts make you capable. Certificates make you legible to employers. Stack them in this order, cheapest proof first, and stop whenever the stack lands the job or the client.

Step one: free and fast. Per Scholas offers tuition-free technology training, including in Los Angeles, with employer connections at the end of the pipeline. It is the strongest free door in this field. Google Career Certificates, in IT support, data analytics, cybersecurity, and more, run online at your pace for a modest monthly fee, and our website's Technology pillar links both, along with free AI course directories.

Step two: AI-specific proof. Free and low-cost AI fundamentals certificates from major platforms prove you can work the new tools. Pair one with a small portfolio: three real projects, a rebuilt resume process, a content system for a local business, an automated report. Proof of work beats proof of attendance.

Step three: the community college bench. Los Angeles community colleges run deep technology and business programs at California resident prices, with credit that transfers. For brothers aiming at degrees or licensed trades with technology layers, this is the durable route, and counselors there can map aid you did not know existed.

PART FOUR

Launch: The One-Person Company

One-person firms have grown more than 20 percent since early 2025, because the stack a solo founder needs finally fits in one pair of hands. Here is the stack, in launch order: form the business and open its bank account; bookkeeping and invoicing software, AI-assisted, from day one; a simple website and booking page; the content engine from Part Two running

weekly; and one offer, clearly priced, sold to a clearly named customer. The weekend checklist: Saturday, formation, accounts, and the offer written in one sentence. Sunday, the website live, the first seven posts drafted, and ten names listed to contact Monday morning. Perfect is not on the checklist. Launched is.

PART FIVE

Know Your Rights

The same technology that opens doors can close them quietly. In Mobley v. Workday, a Morehouse graduate rejected from more than one hundred jobs sued the company whose AI screening software employers use, and federal courts have let the case proceed on the theory that the vendor itself can be liable when its tools screen out protected groups. The lesson for every brother applying through a portal: the algorithm is not the law, and a fast rejection is not a verdict on you. If you are screened out within hours, save everything: the posting, your application, the timestamps, the notices. Ask the employer what tool screened you and what data it used. Complaints about discriminatory screening can go to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and California's Civil Rights Department. Rights you cannot name are rights you cannot use.

PART SIX

AI Agents: Your Digital Crew

Everything before this part is about an assistant that answers. An agent acts. Give it a goal and it works the steps itself: it searches, reads, drafts, calculates, and uses your other tools, your browser, your calendar, your files, then reports back with the work done. If the chat assistant is a brilliant intern, the agent is that intern with a key to the office. The reach is bigger. So is the need for your supervision. This part is the map: what agents make possible, what the evidence says they are worth, and how to run yours without letting them run you.

The opportunity is not coming. It is here. McKinsey's State of AI 2025 survey found 62 percent of organizations already experimenting with AI agents and 23 percent scaling them somewhere in the business. Gartner projects that by the end of 2026, 40 percent of enterprise applications will have task-specific AI agents built in, up from under 5 percent in 2025. Translation for the brother reading this: within a year or two, agents stop being a headline and become standard equipment, like email. The men who learn to direct them early will be directing the work. The men who do not will be handed whatever the agents leave behind.

What the evidence says they are worth. In a study of more than 5,000 customer support agents published in the Quarterly Journal of Economics, workers with a generative AI assistant

resolved 14 percent more issues per hour, and the newest, least experienced workers gained the most: 34 percent. In a preregistered experiment published in Science, professionals using ChatGPT finished writing tasks 40 percent faster with quality rated 18 percent higher. In a Harvard randomized trial, a well-built AI tutor produced more than double the learning gains of a strong classroom lesson, in less time. The honest counterweight comes from a two-year study of Khan Academy's Khanmigo tutor in Tennessee middle schools: the gains tracked plain practice, because most students barely engaged the tutor. The lesson is not that the tools are magic. The lesson is that the tool works when you work it, which is the same discipline this whole playbook runs on.

Black brothers are not behind here. We are early. Black-owned businesses have integrated AI tools at higher rates than their peers: 79 percent, against 62 percent of non-Black owners (Intuit QuickBooks, 2025). Half of Black adults already use AI chatbots, matching the national average (Pew Research Center, 2026), and 58 percent of all small businesses now use generative AI, more than double the share in 2023 (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2025). The stakes for staying early are real. McKinsey's Institute for Black Economic Mobility found about 24 percent of Black workers sit in jobs with the highest automation potential, and warns that if old wealth patterns hold, generative AI could widen the racial wealth gap by $43 billion a year. Two roads run from the same technology: displaced by it, or deployed with it. This playbook exists to put you on the second road.

Agents by Lane

In school. For our boys and for brothers back in the classroom: research agents that gather sources and build the bibliography while the student does the reading; nightly study systems that quiz, track what is shaky, and adjust; tutors like Khanmigo that are built to coach with questions instead of handing over answers. The rules of the school govern, always. The agent does the legwork. The learning, the writing, and the name on the paper stay yours. A young man who learns to direct these tools for his schoolwork is rehearsing the exact skill his first employer will pay for.

On the job, the 9-to-5. This is where agents pay rent fastest. Inbox triage that sorts, flags, and drafts replies for your approval. A morning brief built from your calendar and your projects before you sit down. Meeting prep that pulls the background, last meeting's commitments, and the numbers into one page. First drafts of the reports and summaries that eat your afternoons. The promotion logic is simple: the worker who runs agents produces like a small team, documents his wins as he goes, and walks into review season with receipts. Pair the agents with the Promotion Case Builder prompt in Part Two and you are not asking for advancement. You are presenting evidence for it.

For entrepreneurs. Agents are the staff a solo founder could never afford. A follow-up agent that answers new leads in minutes and never lets an inquiry sit overnight. A content agent that drafts the week of posts from one short brief, in your voice, for your approval. A back-office agent that categorizes expenses, chases unpaid invoices, and keeps the books current. A research agent that watches competitors and prices and reports every Monday. This is the One-Person Company from Part Four with a crew inside it, and it is why one-person firms keep growing.

In your personal life, yes, even dating. Agents and assistants can run the logistics of a full life: calendar, reminders, travel, reservations, the briefing you read with your coffee. And on dating, the numbers say our brothers are already there: 39 percent of U.S. singles have used AI in their dating lives, and men lead at 47 percent (Match and the Kinsey Institute, Singles in America, 2026), mostly to write better profiles and messages. Use it the way Part Two's dating prompts do: polish, never pretend. The same survey found about a third of singles call AI-altered photos a dealbreaker, and two-thirds say AI cannot replace human connection. Let the tool sharpen your words. Then show up as yourself, because she is meeting you, not your software.

Your First Three Agents

One: the Morning Brief. An agent that checks your calendar, your priority inbox, and your project list, then hands you one page: what is on today, what needs a decision, and what it already drafted for your approval. Start here. It teaches you the rhythm of directing and reviewing in ten minutes a day.

Two: the Job Hunt agent. An agent that watches the job boards you name, scores each posting against your resume, and keeps a live list of your best matches, with tailored resume drafts waiting for your review. It hunts while you work. Nothing applies in your name until you say send.

Three: the Follow-Up agent. For business owners: an agent connected to your inquiry channels that drafts a warm, specific reply to every new lead within the hour, in your voice, and queues it for your one-tap approval. Speed is the whole sale. Most small business leads go to whoever answers first, and now that is you.

Where to get them. Current agent tools include the agent modes built into the major chat assistants and dedicated agent platforms for founders and small teams. Names and pricing change monthly, so the live links live where we keep them current: the Technology and AI pillar at weareubla.org and inside the Two Steps Ahead app. Pick one tool, run one agent well, then expand. Tool-hopping is procrastination in a costume.

The Supervision Rules

Agents act, so you manage. One: start read-only. Let a new agent watch, sort, and draft before it is allowed to touch anything. Two: nothing sends, posts, publishes, or spends in your name without your approval, ever. The approval step is not a delay, it is the job. Three: review like a manager. Spot-check sources, read what it wrote before it travels, and kill any agent whose work you would not sign. Four: the golden rules from Part One apply double. An agent with access to your accounts multiplies both your reach and your exposure, so passwords, account numbers, and other people's private information stay out of its hands. Run this way, an agent is leverage. Run loose, it is a liability with your name on it.

A Closing Word

Don't get replaced. Get equipped. Learn the tools, get certified, build and own: that is the Technology and AI pillar's whole creed, and this playbook is its field manual. The future is being built right now, in rooms that are more open than they have ever been. Be in the room, holding the tools.

The AI Cheat Code: A Builder's Playbook is a program resource of United Brothers of Los Angeles (UBLA), the Technology & AI pillar's companion to Civic School, The Health Playbook, and The Legacy Workbook. Tool names and programs change; verify current details before enrolling or purchasing.

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