

Build your first AI tool to automate a workflow

Follow this step-by-step process to create a tool without writing a single line of code. Plus: the prompting formula, the stack, and examples of what solopreneurs are building right now.

BEFORE YOU BUILD

The Self-Audit

What is costing you the most money right now?

What is wasting the most time per week?

Which of the three phases does your answer belong to?

- Booking the call
 Closing the contract
 Delivering the excellence

WHAT BUILDING COSTS NOW

Solo teams can now ship what used to take a team

MARKETING WEBSITE

Before

~~\$500—\$10,000~~ + agency
4–8 weeks

↓

NOW

\$20–\$100
An afternoon, solo

Tools: Claude, Lovable, v0, Ember

CUSTOM WORKFLOW TOOLS

Before

~~\$50–\$200/mo per tool or
\$3k–\$5K to build~~

↓

NOW

~\$100/mo total
Days to weeks, solo

Tools: Claude Code, VS Code, Zapier

AI AGENT / AUTOMATION

Before

~~Not possible, or \$60K+ full-time hire~~

↓

NOW

~\$50–\$200/mo
A few weeks, solo

Tools: Claude Agent SDK, n8n, Make

THE TOOLS

The AI Stack

RESEARCH AND THINKING

Claude

ChatGPT

Perplexity

DESIGN AND PROTOTYPING

Lovable

V0

Claude Design

Ember

FUNCTIONAL BUILDING

Claude Code

VS Code

AUTOMATION AND INTEGRATION

Zapier

n8n

Make

Pro tip: You don't need all of these. Pick one thinking-and-building platform and start there. Memory, saved context, and personalization settings compound over time.

THE PROMPTING FORMULA

Four-part formula for step one

01

WHO I AM

Your role, your business context, how you work

02

WHAT PROBLEM I'M EXPERIENCING

Specific, not general. Name the exact friction.

03

WHAT INFORMATION I ALREADY HAVE

The inputs you're working with: transcripts, notes, templates

04

WHAT OUTPUT I WANT, AND WHY

Format, length, audience, and what you'll do with it

Build a proposal pipeline: a worked example

Follow this process to create a tool that turns a discovery call transcript into a proposal draft in your voice, without writing a single line of code. The same steps apply to any workflow you want to build.

01 Start building: four-part prompt formula

Open an LLM (Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini). Describe who you are, what's broken, what you have, and what you want.

The goal isn't to get the LLM to build anything yet. It's to give it enough context to generate a build brief. See the prompting formula below for the exact structure.

EXAMPLE PROMPT

WHO I AM:

I'm a fractional COO working with seed-to-Series B founders.

WHAT PROBLEM I'M EXPERIENCING:

After every discovery call, I spend 60–90 minutes turning the transcript into a proposal.

WHAT INFORMATION I HAVE:

My standard proposal template and the call transcript.

WHAT OUTPUT I WANT, AND WHY:

A tool where I can upload the transcript and voice samples and get a full proposal draft in my voice, with the ability to edit sections and export the final version.

02 The LLM generates a build brief

A structured spec describing what the tool should do, its inputs, outputs, and logic

The LLM doesn't build the tool. It produces a build brief: a document ready to hand off to a UI builder.

EXAMPLE BUILD BRIEF

TOOL

Proposal Generator

INPUTS

client name, transcript (upload or paste), voice samples, proposal template

OUTPUTS

full proposal draft in user's voice, section-by-section editing, PDF or clipboard export

LOGIC

extract goals, timeline, budget signals, and pain points from transcript. Map to template sections. Write in the tone set by voice samples. Flag any gaps.

03 Paste the brief into a UI builder

Pick a UI builder such as Ember, Lovable, or v0. Paste the build brief directly into the chat prompt.

The UI builder reads the spec and translates it into a working interface.

04 Answer the clarifying questions

A few plain-language questions, then the builder generates the prototype

Answer a few plain-language questions about styling, export format, or behavior. The builder generates the prototype.

05 Test and iterate

Run a real transcript through it. Describe what needs to change and the builder updates it.

The first version is a starting point. Note what's off and describe the fix in plain language. Within 15 minutes of iteration, the tool is producing proposals ready to review and send.

WHAT TO BUILD

Nine solo workflow tools to start building now

Booking the Call

Network Resurrection	Surfaces contacts who've gone cold and flags who to reach out to now.
Discovery Call Prep Brief	Pulls context on a prospect before every call.
Email Sorter	Categorizes incoming email and drafts priority replies.

Closing the Contract

Call-to-Proposal Pipeline	Turns a discovery call transcript into a proposal draft in your voice.
Objection Co-Pilot	Prepares responses to common objections before a follow-up call.
Value vs. Opportunity-Cost	Frames what not hiring you actually costs a prospect.

Delivering Excellence

Client Onboarding Wizard	Takes a signed contract and produces a first-week plan.
Context-Switch Brief	Prepares you to move between clients without rebuilding context.
Notes to Action Items	Converts raw meeting notes into structured next steps with owners and deadlines.
