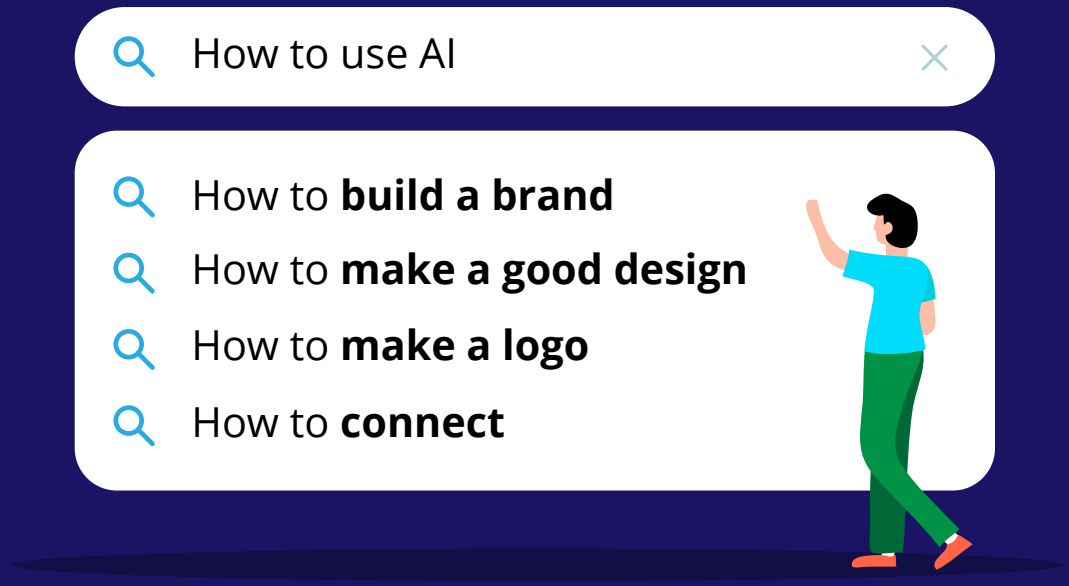
SMALL BUSINESS BRITAIN | BT



Your Guide to AI

What is AI and how to use it

What is AI?

AI stands for Artificial Intelligence.

AI is technology that allows a machine to help do tasks that would normally require a human brain - i.e writing a letter, answering questions, making suggestions.

Types of AI

Standalone AI - i.e Chat gpt, Gemini

Integrated AI - i.e Gemini Workspace

Purpose built AI - A programme designed for something specific, i.e identifying an illness

How AI can help your business

Customer Service Automation

- Chatbots can handle common customer queries 24/7 (e.g., order status, FAQs).
- Frees up time for staff and improves customer response times.

Marketing & Personalisation

- AI can analyse customer behaviour to target ads more effectively.
- Helps personalise email campaigns or product recommendations.
- Increases engagement and conversion rates with minimal manual effort.

Inventory & Supply Management

- Predicts demand based on historical data.
- Helps reduce overstocking or stockouts.
- Automates reordering processes.

Sales Forecasting

- Uses past sales trends and external factors to predict future sales.
- Enables better budgeting and decision-making.

Financial Management

- AI tools can automate bookkeeping, categorise expenses, and detect anomalies.
- Some can forecast cash flow or suggest savings opportunities.

Customer Insights

- AI can analyse reviews, surveys, or social media to gauge customer sentiment.
- Helps identify areas to improve products or services.

Task Automation

- Automates repetitive tasks like data entry, appointment scheduling, or invoice creation.
- Saves time and reduces human error.

Hiring & HR Support

- AI-powered platforms can screen resumes, match candidates to job descriptions, and schedule interviews.
- Makes the hiring process faster and more efficient.

Competitive Analysis

- AI tools can track competitors' pricing, marketing strategies, or customer feedback.
- Gives insights to adjust your own approach.

Is it safe to use?

AI is generally safe for everyday use, especially with trusted platforms - but there are a few things to be mindful of:

Data Privacy

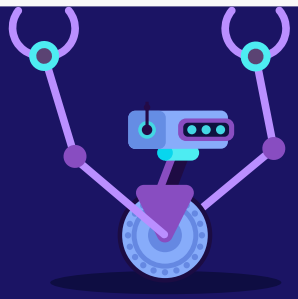
Don't feed it sensitive customer data unless the tool is secure and compliant.

Accuracy

AI can sometimes make mistakes ("hallucinate" facts), so it's good to doublecheck its output.

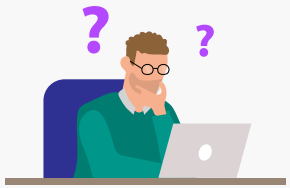
Bias

AI can reflect the bias in the data it was trained on, so always use your own judgment.



Where to start?

For small businesses or individuals looking to start using AI, the best approach is to begin small and focus on solving specific problems.



Don't do everything at once

Choose a focus, for example content creation or writing posts.

- Writing social media posts
- Drafting emails or newsletters
- Creating product descriptions
- Answering FAQs

... and choose an easy tool to use, Chat GPT or Canva would be perfect for the above.

Beginner friendly tools

AI Writing Tools

Examples: *ChatGPT, Jasper*

Help write content, product descriptions, or social media posts.

Email Marketing AI

Examples: *Mailchimp, Constant Contact*

Automate and personalize campaigns.

Chatbots

Examples: *Tidio, Chatfuel*

Automate customer messaging on your website or social media.

Scheduling & Calendar AI

Examples: *Calendly, Motion*

Automate meeting booking and reminders

Example prompt based on social media and marketing

"Create a 7-day marketing and social media content plan for a [the type of business, i.e stationery business, include links where possible for extra detail]. Include platform suggestions (e.g., Instagram, Facebook), post ideas, captions, and any promotions or engagement tips for each day. Keep the tone [e.g., friendly and timeless] and aim to build engagement and visibility."

AI's example answer

Day	Platform	Post Type	Idea	Sample Caption	Engagement Tip
Mon	Instagram + Stories	Product Feature	Showcase elegant wedding invitations	"Classic meets custom ✨ Our handmade wedding suites add that perfect touch of romance to your day. Which design style is so you—florals 🌸 or minimal lines ✨?"	Use a story poll: "Florals or Minimal?"
Tue	Facebook	Customer Spotlight	Share a recent client story (e.g., hen do invites or signage)	"We loved designing these playful hen do invites for Sarah & her girls 💌 Swipe to see how they turned out!"	Ask: "What theme would you pick for a hen party invite?"
Wed	Instagram Reels	Behind-the-Scenes	Short video of your design or printing process	"From sketch to print ✍️🖨️ Here's how a birthday invite is born. Watch the magic happen!"	Use trending audio + add a caption bubble with "Made with love"
Thu	Instagram + Facebook	Educational/Value Post	Tips on what to include in a wedding invite suite	"Planning your invites? Here are 5 must-haves: 💍 Date & time 💌 RSVP info 📍 Location details & more…"	Invite comments: "What did you forget—or almost forget—on your invites?"
Fri	Instagram Stories	Community Engagement	"This or That" interactive quiz (e.g., script vs serif fonts, floral vs modern themes)	"Let's play: This or That – Event Stationery Edition 💌"	Use story stickers: "Vote your vibe!"
Sat	Instagram Carousel	Event Inspiration	Mood board or collage of past event pieces (e.g., birthday + wedding + bridal shower)	"Whatever you're celebrating—we have the paper to match 🎉✨ Which of these is your fave?"	CTA: "Tag someone with a celebration coming up!"
Sun	Facebook + Instagram	Gratitude / Recap	Thank your customers and highlight a week win	"Feeling thankful 💛 We got to be part of 3 beautiful weddings this week. So grateful to be included in your special moments."	Encourage DMs: "Planning something? Let's chat!"

The future of AI

You might be wondering, what will AI provide next?

While we're already seeing AI write content, summarise data, and automate tasks, the future could include:

- Better voice assistants for work
- AI that helps make real-time business decisions
- Smarter design, writing, and research tools
- AI that works with other tools automatically (like "AI teammates")

Remember

AI doesn't replace your work, it enhances it.

AI is there to support your ideas, not replace them.

AI isn't always right, use it as a helpful tool, not necessarily your final answer.

You don't need to be a tech expert. Just explore what's available, use free or low cost tools and see what works for you.