



Economic Development & Workforce Council Newsletter

2025| May

Our Top Story AI isn't magic. It's good prompting.



By: Hope Hartman, Executive Director, SBDC

As AI tools become more accessible to small businesses, entrepreneurs, and advisors alike, one truth remains clear: the quality of your prompt determines the quality of your result. Yet many first-time users jump into AI expecting magic, only to find confusing, incomplete, or off-target outputs. I hear this every week and if people write off AI they will get left behind.

Whether you're using AI for marketing ideas, financial modeling, or client services, learning how to prompt effectively is the key to making these tools work for

you. Remember AI is a TOOL. Here are a few important guidelines to keep in mind:

1. Be Clear, Specific, and Contextual

Vague prompts lead to vague answers. A question like "Help me with a business plan" is too broad. Instead, give the AI clear details: "Help me draft a one-page business plan outline for a new food truck targeting college campuses, focusing on sustainable sourcing." The more relevant context you give, the sharper the result.

2. State the Role You Want AI to Play

Imagine AI as a versatile assistant — but you need to tell it what hat to wear. You'll get very different results depending on if you ask it to act as a business consultant, marketing strategist, or copy editor. Example: "Act as a content strategist helping a nonprofit organization focused on entrepreneurial education."

3. Ask for Structure When Needed

If you want information organized a certain way — like a checklist, table, or bullet points — say so. AI follows structure cues well when they're provided up front. Example: "List 5 social media content ideas for a new series of business succession planning classes, organized by platform (Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook)."

4. Use Iteration, Not Perfection

Think of your first prompt as a draft, not a final command. It's normal — and smart — to ask follow-up questions, refine instructions, or tweak the task. AI improves dramatically

when you treat it like a conversation, not a one-and-done. Don't give up if the first response is off base, keep teaching it and remember #1 above.

5. Keep Human Oversight Front and Center

Even with great prompts, AI can occasionally get things wrong. Always review outputs critically (I will state this every time when referencing AI), especially for customer-facing information. AI should assist your judgment, not replace it.

Final Thought: Prompts aren't just technical instructions — they are how you guide creativity, expertise, and insight from AI. Learning to “think in prompts” is quickly becoming a modern essential skill for business owners and advisors alike. What's one area of your work where a better prompt could save you hours next week?

Upcoming EDWC Programs



The graphic for the Ready, Set, Grow! Women's Conference features three paper tags hanging from a string with colorful clothespins. The tags read "DREAM BIG", "SET GOALS", and "TAKE ACTION". Below the tags is a green leaf logo with the text "READY, SET, GROW!" and "WOMENS CONFERENCE". The text describes the conference as a day of networking, learning, and empowerment. The date is May 15th, 2025, at Expedition Lodge, Estes Park, CO. Panel topics include Social Media, AI for Small Business, Finance, Health & Well Being, and Goal Setting. The keynote speaker is Dale Wilsher. Sponsors include Julie Abel (Signature Home Team, Keller Williams Realty NoCo) and Harriette Woodard (Bank of Colorado, Mortgage Division).

READY, SET, GROW!
WOMENS CONFERENCE

Empowering Women - A Conference for Growth and Inspiration! Join us for a day of networking, learning and empowerment at the Ready Set Grow! Womens Conference!

DATE: MAY 15TH 2025
EXPEDITION LODGE
ESTES PARK, CO.

Panel Topics
Social Media
AI for Small Business -
Finance Health & Well
Being - Goal Setting

INSPIRING KEYNOTE SPEAKER
DALE WILSHER

REGISTER NOW
[@ESTESCHAMBER.ORG/EVENTS](https://www.esteschamber.org/events)

Sponsors

Julie Abel
Signature Home Team
Keller Williams Realty NoCo

Harriette Woodard
Bank of Colorado
Mortgage Division

Join us for a day of networking, learning, empowerment and inspiration at the Ready, Set, Grow! Women's Conference.

The inaugural Ready, Set, Grow conference is taking center stage on May 15th to educate, motivate, and empower female entrepreneurs in the Estes Valley. Hundreds are expected to gather at Expedition Lodge on N. Lake Ave for a day of experience sharing, networking, and leadership training. The day will begin with mindfulness exercise, followed by a keynote presentation from coach and author Dale Wilsher of “Your Authentic Personality.” The schedule is filled with panel discussions and workshops on a variety of topics ranging from financial decision making to brand identity building.

Register for the conference - May 15th Expedition Lodge



The graphic for the Seasonal Workforce Welcome Event features the Estes Chamber of Commerce logo on the left. The text reads "SEASONAL WORKFORCE WELCOME EVENT" and "Tuesday May 20th 10:30- 1:30". Below the text is a photo of a speaker at a podium addressing an audience. The location is listed as "Estes Valley Library Hondius Room".

ESTES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SEASONAL WORKFORCE WELCOME EVENT
Tuesday May 20th 10:30- 1:30

Estes Valley Library Hondius Room

EDWC will be hosting Welcome learning receptions for Seasonal workforce and J1 students

SESSION 1: May 20th
TIME: 10:30a.m.-1:30p.m.

SESSION 2: June 16th
TIME: 1:00p.m.-4:00p.m.

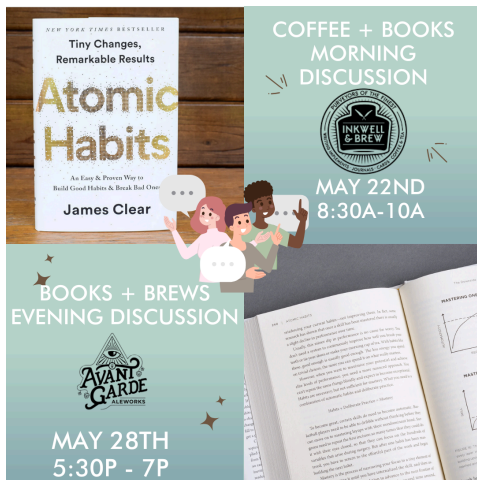
LOCATION: Both sessions will be at the Estes Valley Library - Hondius Room

Join us at either session to hear from community leaders sharing general knowledge on Estes Park with both seasonal workforce and J1 students.

These session are designed to prepare our workforce to engage with our visitors and being able to answer questions about Estes Park.

Register for May 20th

Register June 16th



EDWC has launched a leadership focused book club! The first title is *Atomic Habits* by James Clear. The Council will host two discussion sessions:

Coffee + Books at Inkwell & Brew
DATE: May 22nd
TIME: 8:30a.m.-10:00a.m.

Books + Brews at Avant Garde Aleworks
DATE: May 28th
TIME: 5:30p.m.-7:00p.m.



The Chamber has created a new Construction Alliance

The first meeting will be on June 25th from 4:30p.m. - 6:00p.m. at The Lumpy Ridge Brewing Publick House

All leaders of businesses in or affiliated with the construction industry are invited to join the discussion!

Register Today

Larimer County & Northern Colorado Latest



Impact Updates from Visit Estes Park

Read the latest reports from the local marketing district regarding:



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CSU Venture Validator Program

Stage 1: Venture Validator 1.0

October 23, 2025

The Venture Validator is the starting blocks for your entrepreneurial venture. This cohort-based program takes you through all the steps to get your venture off the ground and figure out if there's a real opportunity there. The Validator is a 2-week 4 session program where you will:

**Net Economic Impact Report
(2024)**

**VEP Marketing Strategy-
Summer 2025**

6E 2024 Impact Report

**6E Workforce Housing and
Childcare Lodging Tax
Presentation**

1. Understand who your customer is and what drives their decision making.
2. Clarify your value proposition and know exactly what problem you're solving and how.
3. Build out the first half of your Business Model Canvas, identifying all the components needed to have a sustainable business.
4. Learn from successful entrepreneurs and mentors as they guide you on your journey.

Stage 2: Venture Validator 2.0

November 13, 2025

The Venture Validator 2.0 is a continuation of your customer discovery journey from the Venture Validator 1.0. This cohort-based explored the second half of the BMC to dive deep on if there's a real opportunity to turn your idea into a business. The Validator 2.0 is a 2-week 4 session program where you will:

1. Develop your competitive landscape and see how you differentiate.
2. Explore your supply chain and prospective partnerships.
3. Build out the second half of your Business Model Canvas, identifying all the components needed to run a sustainable business.
4. Learn how to build your Minimum Viable Product/Prototype.
5. Learn from successful entrepreneurs and mentors as they guide you on your journey.

Register Here

Colorado State Updates



Bookkeeping Basics for Small Business Learning Opportunities

Wednesday, May 07, 2025 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Facilitated by Larimer SBDC

Solid bookkeeping is the foundation of every successful business and understanding the basics can save you time, money, and future stress.

Join us for this no cost Small Business Week workshop designed to help small business owners build confidence in managing their financial records. Whether you're doing the books yourself or preparing to hand them off, this session will give you the clarity you need to make informed decisions and stay compliant.

In this one-hour workshop, you'll learn:

- What bookkeeping is and why it's essential for business success
- The key components of a basic bookkeeping system
- Why reconciling your accounts matters—and how to do it
- How to understand and organize your chart of accounts
- An introduction to financial statements and what they tell you
- When it's time to get outside help and how to find the right fit

Whether you're just getting started or need a refresher, this session will give you practical tools and insights to better manage your books and grow your business with confidence.



MANAGEMENT BOOTCAMP

- What to do before you hire someone,
- How to orient them to your company;
- How to effectively set expectations and manage their behavior
- How to discipline and terminate employees safely

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

Thursday, May 22, 2025

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Workshop will be held via Zoom



Management Bootcamp

Thursday, May 22, 2025 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Mountain

Location: Online

Time to hire an employee? What paperwork should you complete? How do you train them? How do you keep them engaged and motivated? What happens if you have to fire them?

This workshop will provide you with a framework to improve hiring, firing, and managing employees in your organization. You will learn the steps in the employee life cycle:

- What to do before you hire someone,
- How to orient them to your company;
- How to effectively set expectations and manage their behavior
- How to discipline and terminate employees safely

Suggested Audience: Business owners and managers who currently have or are planning to hire employees.

[Learn More & Register](#)



[Register](#)

SOVRA Small Business Showcase at NIGP Forum 2025

Do you have a small/mid size business interested in showcasing your business to 1,300+ Government Procurement Professionals?

The NIGP Forum the perfect place to network and will be hosted here in Colorado for the first time since 1995.

Dates: July 28-29, 2025

Location: Colorado Convention Center

[Informational Recording](#)

EDWC Council Members

Christina Kraft, Bank of Colorado, Market President Estes Park, EDWC Chair

Diane Muno, White Orchid, Owner, EDWC Secretary

Bill Brown, Estes Park Town Trustee

Jason Damweber, Estes Park, Deputy Town Administrator

Adam Crowe, Larimer County, Economic Development Manager

Rebecca D. Gelsinger, Visit Estes Park, Director of Operations

Nick Smith, Lumpy Ridge Brewing, Owner

Ingrid Bush, The Barrel, Owner



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