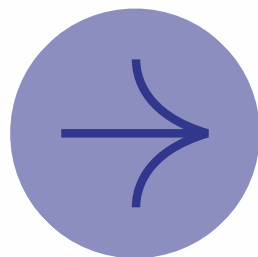


James E.Varnham

ELEVATE YOUR AI COACHING STRATEGY



Navigating the Jagged Technological Edge

In your Coaching Practice and in Running your coaching business

Understanding the AI Frontier

The concept of the "jagged technological edge" describes the uneven landscape of artificial intelligence capabilities; where AI excels brilliantly in some areas while falling short or creating risks in others. For coaching professionals, understanding this jagged frontier is crucial for leveraging AI's benefits while avoiding potential pitfalls.

When to Deploy AI

AI shines brightest when tasks are generative, creative, and low-stakes. Deploy AI confidently for:

- Generative tasks that require brainstorming and ideation
- Summarization-heavy work that involves distilling complex information
- Creative writing and content development
- Brainstorming sessions that benefit from expanded perspectives
- Structuring information and organizing thoughts
- Option-expanding activities that explore multiple possibilities

The key criterion: these should be **low-stakes situations with human review** built into the process.

When to Gate or Avoid AI

Certain domains require extreme caution or complete avoidance of AI due to accuracy requirements, regulatory constraints, or ethical considerations:

- Compliance-related tasks where precision is legally required
- Finance and tax matters that demand accuracy and accountability
- Clinical, medical, or legal domains where errors can cause harm
- Precision analytics requiring verified data and calculations
- Crisis-sensitive actions where immediate human judgment is essential

In these areas, AI should only serve as scaffolding or checklist support, never as the primary decision-maker.

The Golden Rule of Thumb

The fundamental principle for AI deployment follows a clear boundary:

Inside the Frontier = Productivity, creativity, ideation, and communication enhancement

Outside the Frontier = Correctness-critical, regulated, or ethically sensitive tasks

This framework helps coaching professionals make informed decisions about when and how to integrate AI into their practice while maintaining professional standards and client trust.

AI Within Coaching Practice



The following example framework outlines how AI can enhance client-facing coaching work while maintaining ethical boundaries and professional standards.

Coaching Phase	Inside the Frontier (Deploy)	Outside the Frontier (Gate or Add Checks)	Examples
Contracting & Consent	Plain-language AI disclosure, menu of AI uses, consent capture	Implicit/hidden AI use; auto-recording without notice	Share a 1-pager: "How we may use AI (optional), what data we never share."
Goal Setting	Turn messy goals into SMART/OKR formulations; surface assumptions; draft milestone plans	Setting goals for the client; prescriptive life/mental-health advice	Convert this goal into 3 measurable outcomes and 6-week milestones. Suggest 5 reflective questions.
Session Prep	Summarize client notes, propose inquiry angles, scenario prompts	Biasing the agenda; over-steering client direction	From last session notes, list 8 neutral questions that expand options, not advice.
Live Session Co-Thinking	Vocabulary expansion, metaphor generation, stakeholder mapping canvases	Diagnosing mental health, legal/financial prescriptions, personality typing	Generate 4 reframes of this dilemma using different lenses (values, systems, time).
Reflection & Journaling	Clean transcripts, theme clusters, values/strengths language suggestions	Inferring clinical traits; overfitting narratives	Summarize themes from this journal in 120 words; add 3 questions, no advice.
Action Planning	Option sets with pros/cons, risk registers, "first tiny step" ideas	Complex project plans with critical dependencies; safety-critical actions	Propose 5 tiny next steps under 15 minutes each toward Goal X.
Feedback & Measurement	Draft check-ins, convert outcomes to metrics, visualize trend lines	Manipulating or inventing data; attributing causality	Turn these notes into 3 measurable indicators and a monthly check-in template.
Sensitive Topics	Language polishing for values statements; compiling resources the client provides	Any diagnosis, crisis guidance, high-stakes legal/medical counsel	n/a

Key Success Examples

- **Goal Setting:** "Convert this goal into 3 measurable outcomes and 6-week milestones. Suggest 5 reflective questions."
- **Session Prep:** "From last session notes, list 8 neutral questions that expand options, not advice."
- **Live Co-Thinking:** "Generate 4 reframes of this dilemma using different lenses (values, systems, time)."

Back-office operations present numerous opportunities for AI enhancement while requiring careful attention to compliance and accuracy standards.

Business Area	Inside the Frontier (Deploy)	Outside the Frontier (Gate or Add Checks)	Example Applications
Marketing & PR	Drafting posts/newsletters, repurposing transcripts, headline/tagline variants, first-draft PR pitches, SEO meta, UTM planning	Sensitive claims verification, media fact checks, crisis communications, anything legalistic	"Turn this transcript into a 200-word LinkedIn post and a 90-sec hook; ask me 5 facts to verify before final."
Sales & Business Development	Lead research summaries, call briefs, proposal scaffolds, objection-handling libraries, email cadences	Pricing architecture, contractual terms, promising outcomes, tailoring to complex stakeholder politics	"Draft a 1-page proposal structure with options (Good/Better/Best) for a 6-session executive package. Leave all prices as variables."
Admin & Operations	Inbox triage drafts, templated responses, SOP drafting, data cleanup suggestions, tag/field mapping	PII handling, policy compliance, payments & invoicing logic, tax coding	"Turn these 8 steps into a crisp SOP with roles, RACI, and a 10-item QA checklist."
Finance	Narrative for invoices, cash-flow commentary, vendor comparisons, budget-to-actual summaries	Tax advice, accounting entries, regulatory compliance, revenue recognition	"Summarize this export into a 'board-ready' 150-word cashflow story with 3 risks and mitigations."
Web & Collateral	First drafts, message testing (A/B), visual concept notes, slide outlines	Brand-critical visual design, accessibility compliance, unique diagrams	"Outline a 10-slide creds deck with slide titles, speaker notes, and 1 evidence point per slide. Leave placeholders for proofs."
Research & Insight	Literature skim, executive bios, thematic syntheses, question lists	Citing paywalled/dated or misattributed sources, legal/medical claims	"Create a client brief: 5 strategic priorities inferred from their last 3 earnings calls + 10 discovery questions."

Success Principles

The most successful AI implementations in coaching businesses maintain

- human oversight for critical decisions.
- use AI as a productivity multiplier rather than a replacement.
- establish clear boundaries between AI-assisted tasks and those requiring human expertise and accountability.



What Is CIDI?

CIDI is a simple 4-step framework for writing better AI prompts. Instead of tossing a random request into ChatGPT, you give it a structured brief. It's fast, clear, and repeatable.

Why It Matters

CIDI gives structure to your thinking — and that clarity translates into better results.

Without CIDI	With CIDI
Generic, surface level text	Clear, audience relevant insight
Re-writes required	First drafts that stick
Random Tone	Controlled Tone
Guesswork	Guided Precision

The Four Elements

Context

Define who the AI is and what it's doing.
Example: "You are a market analyst for the coaching profession."

Instruction

Tell it exactly what you want.
Example: "Write a 200-word overview of how AI supports coaching."

Details

Add tone, audience, and constraints.
Example: "Write for experienced coaches who are curious but cautious about AI."

Input

Specify format or structure.
Example: "Produce three short sections: Practical Applications, Benefits, and Limitations."

Benefits of Using CIDI

- Clarity – Less time fixing vague answers.
- Relevance – Output matches your audience and purpose.
- Reusability – Save once, use often.
- Confidence – Feel in control of the result, not at the mercy of it.

How to Start

- Choose a topic you know well.
- Write one sentence for each CIDI element.
- Test it in ChatGPT and refine.
- Save it as a reusable template.
- CIDI turns random prompting into intentional creation.
- Spend an extra 60 seconds up front — and save 20 minutes fixing it later.



One-shot prompt without CIDI on coaching

Example:

“Write about how AI can be used in coaching.”

Use the CIDI framework on the same coaching prompt

Example:

CONTEXT: You are a market analyst for the coaching profession. Your goal is to explain how AI can support professional coaches in their practice.

INSTRUCTION: Write a 200-word overview describing specific, practical applications of AI in coaching, with examples relevant to executive and life coaching.

DETAILS: The summary will be used in a workshop for professional coaches who are curious but skeptical about AI. Write in a professional yet reassuring tone, and highlight both opportunities and potential pitfalls

INPUT: Produce 3 short sections with headings: (1) Practical Applications, (2) Benefits for Coaches, (3) Limitations & Cautions

NOTES: Make a brief note of what you noticed when comparing methods

Clarity & Relevance

- Which output felt clearer or more relevant to your audience?
- Did the AI actually understand what you wanted?
- How specific or useful was the information provided?

Structure & Flow

- Which output was easier to follow?
- Did one version provide a better sense of flow or organisation?
- How well did each version stay within the format or structure you wanted?

Usefulness & Effort

- Which output would you actually use with a client or in a session?
- Did the CIDI version save you time editing or refining the result?
- Was the extra setup time worth it in the quality of the output?

Tone & Authenticity

- Which output sounds more like something you’d say or share?
- Did either version capture your professional tone or coaching style?
- Was one version more “robotic” or generic than the other?

Insight & Depth

- Which version offered real insight, not just filler?
- Did one response feel more thoughtful, nuanced, or grounded?
- Was there a noticeable difference in how deeply the AI understood the topic?

The AI Chatbot Persona Guide

A practical cheat-sheet for coaching professionals exploring AI assistants.

All the major Chatbots of sweetspots, and in your early use of AI the differences will be subtle, but play around with free versions of the different providers and see if you notice the difference – or end up with a solid ‘all-rounder’ that best fits most of your needs!

ChatGPT — “The Swiss-Army Chief of Staff”

Great at: generating ideas, structuring complex thoughts, and giving you a clear first draft.

Best for: planning workshops, drafting session materials, exploring new concepts.

Watch out: if you don’t give clear instructions, it may “fill in the blanks” in ways you didn’t intend.

Claude — “The Thoughtful Writer-Analyst”

Great at: writing in a warm, professional tone and keeping long documents consistent.

Best for: preparing proposals, reflective pieces, or coaching program outlines.

Watch out: tends to be cautious, so may avoid very bold or edgy styles.

Google Gemini — “The Google-Native Orchestrator”

Great at: searching across Google and summarising findings with clarity.

Best for: gathering background information on clients, markets, or trends.

Watch out: works best if you already use Google Docs, Gmail, and other Google tools.

Microsoft Copilot — “The Enterprise Productivity Pilot”

Great at: simplifying everyday admin tasks inside Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Best for: turning meeting notes into action lists, creating presentations, or cleaning up spreadsheets.

Watch out: depends heavily on how tidy and well-organised your documents are.

Grok — “The Real-Time Maverick”

Great at: picking up trends from social media and giving instant hot takes.

Best for: coaches wanting quick snapshots of what’s buzzing in the world.

Watch out: its playful style sometimes comes across as cheeky or blunt.

DeepSeek — “The Frugal Reasoner”

Great at: breaking down problems step-by-step and helping you think logically.

Best for: mapping out processes, exploring structured frameworks, or untangling tricky challenges.

Watch out: less creative for storytelling or inspirational writing.

Mistral — “The European Black Swan”

Great at: quick, straightforward answers that don't need much fluff.
Best for: bite-sized ideas, drafting exercises, or short-form content.
Watch out: not as strong when you need deep exploration of complex topics.

Perplexity — “The Web-Native Researcher”

Great at: providing answers with sources you can check yourself.
Best for: quick evidence-based research when you want reliable references.
Watch out: gives facts and sources well, but isn't as strong on creative storytelling.

How to Use This Guide

Think of these chatbots as colleagues with different strengths. Need inspiration? Ask ChatGPT. Writing something thoughtful? Claude. Checking sources? Perplexity. Each one plays a different role; choose the right “colleague” for the task at hand.

Disclaimer: Whilst these ‘persona’s’ are commonly appreciated, they are still an opinion of one person!

The RAT-FEET Framework

Role | Audience | Task | Format | Examples | Exclusions | Tone

What Is RAT-FEET?

RAT-FEET is a 7-part framework for creating **context-rich** AI instructions.

It goes beyond single prompts - it helps you build reusable, consistent “project logic” inside ChatGPT Projects or other AI

Where CIDI improves a single output, RAT-FEET defines how the AI thinks about your whole task. It’s your blueprint for clarity, consistency, and personality.

Why It Matters

RAT-FEET turns one-off prompting into structured collaboration.

You’re not just asking for answers — you’re defining roles, guardrails, and expectations.

That context means better alignment, fewer rewrites, and outputs that sound like you every time.

The Seven Elements

Role

Define who or what the AI should be.

Example: “You are a communications coach helping leaders write with confidence.”

Audience

Identify who the content is for.

Example: “Write for mid-career professionals exploring how to use AI in their daily work.”

Task

Explain exactly what you want the AI to do.

Example: “Draft a short article outlining the benefits and challenges of AI in leadership.”

Format

Specify the structure or medium for the output.

Example: “Produce a 400-word LinkedIn post with short paragraphs and a conversational tone.”

Examples

Show the AI what ‘good’ looks like.

Example: “Use storytelling and reflection, similar to the tone of professional coaching blogs.”

Exclusions

State what to avoid — this keeps quality high and style consistent.

Example: “Avoid jargon, overused metaphors, or phrases like ‘AI revolution.’”

Tone

Define how it should sound.

Example: “Professional, authentic, and slightly provocative — confident but not corporate.”

Benefits of Using RAT-FEET

Depth – Provides richer context and purpose across your AI projects.

Consistency – Keeps voice, structure, and style aligned every time.

Efficiency – Reduces trial-and-error by setting clear expectations.

Scalability – Works for individuals, teams, and organisations building reusable AI systems.

How to Start

- Take an existing CIDI prompt you've already written.
- Expand it using the seven RAT-FEET elements; one short line each.
- Test it with ChatGPT and refine wording for clarity and tone.
- Save it as a base instruction set for future projects or agents.
- RAT-FEET builds on the foundation that CIDI creates.
- If CIDI gives you structure, RAT-FEET gives you strategy; the full context behind every great AI interaction

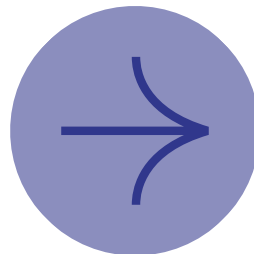


Top Tip: When you're building your RAT-FEET instructions, use AI (ie: ChatGPT) to *help* you build it. You can use the CIDI framework to prompt AI to go through the seven elements one by one, ask you questions which you can answer in your natural language, and from there, you will end with a clear set of instructions that you can copy/paste into the project instructions.



Remember to always check your instructions thoroughly, and iterate where you feel there needs to be more precision. AI can help you along way, but only you can provide the nuance to really get the outputs that you want!

Prompt Example on next page



Example CIDI Prompt to build RAT-FEET Instruction Framework

Context:

You are helping me build a complete RAT-FEET Framework that I can use as a reusable instruction set for a ChatGPT Project or other AI workspace.

RAT-FEET stands for Role, Audience, Task, Format, Examples, Exclusions, Tone.

At the end, you will output a single consolidated instruction set written clearly, ready to paste into a Project or Assistant setup.

Instruction:

Guide me interactively through each of the seven RAT-FEET elements, one at a time.

After each element, pause and show me an example so I can edit or confirm my version before moving to the next.

When all seven are complete, summarise my answers into a clean, copy-ready instruction block labelled "Final RAT-FEET Framework."

Details:

Use a professional, conversational tone.

Each step should include:

A short description of what that element means (in plain English).

1-2 example lines showing what a good answer might look like.

A question prompt for me to complete that element.

At the end, make sure the final version reads like a cohesive set of setup instructions for an AI Project.

Input:

The framework should follow this order:

Role

Audience

Task

Format

Examples

Exclusions

Tone

Finish with:

"Would you like me to format this as a ChatGPT Project instruction block or a Gemini Gem brief?"

Which AI Chatbots work best with RAT-FEET?

Platform	RAT-FEET fit	Why it works / doesn't	What to tweak so it sings
ChatGPT Projects	★★★★★	Project/system instructions persist; model respects Role/Audience/Tone and structured Format.	Keep Examples short and concrete; put Exclusions (no hype, etc.) in the project instructions. Save 2–3 prompt templates.
Claude Projects	★★★★★	Strong project “memory” and attached knowledge; very responsive to Tone/Exclusions.	Add a tiny “house style” block; include 1–2 gold standard outputs under Examples.
Gemini Gems	★★★★★	Gems are literally reusable mini-assistants; RAT-FEET becomes the Gem’s definition.	Put Examples + Exclusions in the Gem body; keep Task generic then specialise with per-use prompts.
Microsoft Copilot Studio	★★★★★	Enterprise assistants with policies, data connectors, and authored topics—RAT-FEET maps cleanly to system instructions and topics.	Add two extras: Data Sources (where to look) and Policies (compliance). RAT-FEET(+DS/P) becomes your copilot spec.

What are the conditions of RAT-FEET working well or not?

Use RAT-FEET when:

- You can set (and reuse) system or project instructions.
- You need consistent brand voice, structure, and guardrails.
- You’re producing repeatable artefacts (decks, briefs, emails, lesson plans).
- You need a dedicated persona to advise you on a broad range of ITEMS within a SUBJECT

Dial it back (or adapt) when:

- The tool is search-led (Perplexity). Prioritise Format + Exclusions (“cite every claim; no opinions”).
- The app has no persistence (DeepSeek chat). Use a micro-RAT-FEET: Role/Audience (1 line), Task (1 line), Format (1 line), Exclusions (1 line).

Which AI Chatbots DON'T work as well with RAT-FEET

Platform	RAT-FEET fit	Why it works / doesn't	What to tweak so it sings
Mistral Le Chat (Projects)	★★★★½	Projects keep context; models follow Role/Tone well, but tooling is lighter than ChatGPT/Claude.	Keep Format explicit every time; store a short reference output under Examples.
Grok Studio	★★★★	Nice for co-creation with a live canvas; persona control is decent but less “governed.”	Use RAT-FEET, but pin Format visibly in the canvas and re-prompt if the editor view drifts.
Perplexity Spaces	★★★	It’s search-first: answers are citation-driven and concise. Tone/Format controls are weaker, and Examples can be overridden by retrieval.	Use a trimmed set: R-A-T-F only. Replace Examples with “citation pattern” (e.g., “3 bullets + sources”). Put Exclusions as “no speculation; cite every claim.”
DeepSeek Chat	★★½	Strong model; minimal project/assistant features. No durable instruction space = less RAT-FEET leverage.	Treat RAT-FEET as a prompt header you paste in. Keep it short. Emphasise Format and Exclusions. Save snippets externally.



AI is a **mirror** that reflects the quality of your questions.

Curiosity is the compass in the age of AI.

Ethics isn't a boundary, it's a direction.



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