

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept, it's a tool advisors can use today to improve efficiency, clarity, and decision-making. Drawing from insights shared by Jonathan Milne, Vice President of AI Services, Demand Spring, here are five foundational tips to help financial advisors begin their AI journey with confidence.

1. Treat AI Like an Intern

Think of AI as a junior team member. It won't read your mind, but it can support your work if you give it clear instructions. Provide context, define objectives, and be specific about what you want. The more detail you give, the better the output. Human in the loop. Always review and be ready to edit any AI output.

2. Start with What You Already Have Access To

Before exploring new platforms, check what AI tools are already available within your organization. Whether it's Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, or another approved tool, begin by learning how to use what's permitted under your company's AI policy.

3. Use AI to Support Daily Routines

AI can help with planning and reflection. Try prompts like:

- *"Review my calendar and summarize key prep tasks for tomorrow."*
- *"Analyze my notes from this week and highlight any missed action items."*

These bookend tasks starting and ending your day are simple ways to integrate AI into your workflow.

4. Understand Prompt Structure

Effective prompting includes variables like:

- **Role** (e.g., "act as a researcher")
- **Task** (e.g., "summarize this document")
- **Tone** (e.g., "in a casual or professional tone")
- **Output format** (e.g., "in bullet points")
- **Restrictions** (e.g., "avoid discussing ...")

Being intentional with these elements helps AI deliver more relevant and useful results.

5. Respect Privacy and Security

Never input client-specific or confidential data into AI tools, especially free ones. Always follow your firm's compliance guidelines and use AI for public-domain tasks like general research or summarizing non-sensitive information.

Key takeaways

AI isn't here to replace advisors, it's here to augment their capabilities. Start small, experiment thoughtfully, and treat AI as a collaborative tool to help you work smarter.

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