



THINKING BETTER WITH AI

Course Overview:

AI is now being used across agency life. Used well, it can save time, sharpen thinking and improve the quality of first drafts. Used badly, it encourages people to accept generic ideas, weak logic, bland writing, shallow strategy and unsupported claims.

This workshop helps PR consultants understand where AI can help — and where human judgement must take over.

DURATION:

Typically up to 8 people.

FORMAT:

Practical, interactive workshop.

AUDIENCE:

Mixed PR agency teams, from junior consultants through to Account Director level.

WHO'S IT FOR:

Agencies that want their teams to use AI intelligently, without losing the judgement, curiosity and critical thinking that clients pay for.



Objectives:

By the end of the session, teams will be able to:

- Understand why critical thinking is becoming more important, not less, in an AI-enabled agency environment.
- Recognise the risks of accepting AI outputs too quickly.
- Identify which parts of agency work can be supported by AI and which require human judgement.
- Apply stronger questioning to client briefs, campaign challenges, content ideas and written outputs.
- Improve AI outputs by challenging, editing and refining them more intelligently.
- Understand how to add more human value through insight, judgement, creativity, audience understanding and client context.
- Leave with a simple review process they can use when working with AI-generated content, plans and proposals.

Session Overview:

1. Why critical thinking matters more in the age of AI

- ✓ The session opens by exploring how consultants are currently using AI across agency work. The group then looks at the central risk: The danger of “outsourcing the thinking” instead of using AI to sharpen it.

Core message: AI can help you work faster. Critical thinking helps you work better.

2) What can AI do — and where do we add value?

Participants then explore the difference between tasks that can be supported by AI and areas where consultants must add human value.

AI can be useful for:

- ✓ Summarising information.
- ✓ Generating first-draft ideas.
- ✓ Creating alternative angles.
- ✓ Producing rough content structures.
- ✓ Suggesting headline options.
- ✓ Testing different tones.
- ✓ Creating prompt stacks for repeatable tasks.
- ✓ Helping consultants get started when facing a blank page.

Human consultants add value by:

- ✓ Understanding the real client challenge.
 - ✓ Asking better questions.
 - ✓ Spotting what is missing.
 - ✓ Interpreting nuance and context.
 - ✓ Identifying audience insight.
 - ✓ Deciding what matters most.
 - ✓ Challenging weak logic.
 - ✓ Recognising bland or generic thinking.
 - ✓ Judging tone, credibility and relevance.
 - ✓ Knowing what will work for the client, audience and media.
 - ✓ Making recommendations clients can trust.
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3) Critical thinking in client challenges and strategy

Participants look at how poor thinking often starts at the beginning of a brief. If the consultant has not understood the client’s business objective, communication objective, audience challenge or

barriers to change, AI will simply produce faster versions of weak thinking.

The session explores how consultants can use better questions to analyse a client challenge before moving to ideas or tactics.

Participants consider:

- ✓ What is the client really trying to achieve?
 - ✓ What is the business objective?
 - ✓ What is the communication objective?
 - ✓ What is the audience thinking, feeling or doing now?
 - ✓ What do we need them to think, feel or do differently?
 - ✓ What barriers are in the way?
 - ✓ What insight changes how we see the challenge?
 - ✓ Are we developing a strategy, or just listing tactics?
 - ✓ Is this recommendation genuinely connected to the objective?
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4. Critical thinking in persuasive writing and content

Participants then look at how critical thinking applies to AI-generated writing.

This section uses critical thinking and persuasive writing principles. Participants explore why AI-generated writing often sounds polished but fails to influence. It may lack a clear reader, a clear result, a strong opening, specific evidence, emotional truth, message discipline or a proper sense of audience.

The emphasis is on using AI for support, not final copy.

5. The Human Check Layer: Reviewing AI output properly

Participants are introduced to a simple Human Check Layer they can apply to any AI-generated output before it is used internally or shared with a client.

The checklist covers:

- ✓ Strategic fit
- ✓ Audience relevance
- ✓ Insight and originality
- ✓ Logic and evidence
- ✓ Message discipline
- ✓ Brand and voice
- ✓ Practical usefulness



PRACTICAL EXERCISES

Exercises can be tailored in advance using real or realistic agency examples.

Exercise 1: What should we outsource to AI?

Participants review a list of common agency tasks and decide which parts could be supported by AI and which require human judgement.

Example tasks might include:

- ✓ Drafting a press release.
- ✓ Analysing a client brief.
- ✓ Developing a campaign strategy.
- ✓ Creating social post options.
- ✓ Writing a media pitch.
- ✓ Preparing a new business proposal.
- ✓ Summarising competitor research.
- ✓ Creating campaign ideas.

The group discusses where AI can help and where consultants must stay in control.

Exercise 2: Spot the weak thinking

Participants are given an AI-generated campaign recommendation or proposal section.

At first glance, it appears fluent and professional. Their task is to identify what is wrong with it.

They look for:

- ✓ Vague objectives.
- ✓ Weak audience understanding.
- ✓ Missing insight.
- ✓ Confusion between strategy and tactics.
- ✓ Generic language.
- ✓ Unsupported claims.
- ✓ Over-promising.
- ✓ Lack of client context.
- ✓ No clear reason why the idea will work.

The exercise helps consultants practise challenging outputs that look good but do not stand up to scrutiny.

Exercise 3: From client brief to better questions

Participants are given a short client brief. Before using AI, they must identify the questions they would need to ask to understand the challenge properly.

They consider:

- ✓ What do we know?
- ✓ What do we not know?
- ✓ What assumptions are we making?
- ✓ What would we need to ask the client?
- ✓ What audience information is missing?
- ✓ What does success look like?
- ✓ What would make this difficult to achieve?

They then build a stronger prompt or briefing note based on that thinking.

Exercise 4: Improve the AI output

Participants are given a weak AI-generated press release, blog opening, campaign idea or pitch email. Using the Human Check Layer, they must:

- ✓ Review the output.
- ✓ Identify the main weaknesses.
- ✓ Decide what human judgement is required.
- ✓ Rewrite the prompt or give better feedback to the AI.
- ✓ Improve the final output manually.

This reinforces the idea that AI outputs should be challenged, refined and edited — not simply accepted.

Exercise 5: Personal action plan

At the end of the session, participants identify how they will apply the learning in their own role.

They consider:

- ✓ One AI habit they need to change.
- ✓ One question they will ask more often.
- ✓ One type of output they will review more critically.
- ✓ One way they can add more human value for clients.
- ✓ One thing the wider agency should do to improve AI quality control.