



The Expert + The Intern

Happy Carnival, Lunar New Year, and Ramadan Kareem!

Since many of us are on holiday this week, I thought: why not dedicate this note to vacation planning?

Speaking of which, we are currently planning a vacation to the Azores (volcanoes and vines!) with another family, and my friend sent me this BBC Travel article: [Seven travel trends that will define 2026.](#)

Trend #2 jumped right out at me: “Gen AI over admin.”

The prediction? That 2026 is the year technology finally removes the “admin” from travel: the endless flight comparisons, the hotel filtering, the logistical headaches, so we can focus on the experience.

Hooray, I say!

Remember the old way of trip planning? You open 50 tabs. You read 12 blogs. You check Google Maps to see if the hotel is actually near the beach. You’re the Researcher, the Secretary, and the Manager. You’re exhausted before you even book.

Now AI promises to handle the grunt work, but here’s the key: we’re still the ones making the decisions.



Think of it as: The Expert + The Intern

*Your Taste (The Expert) + AI Research & Speed (The Intern) =
Supercharged Planning*

You're the Expert on your family. You know your toddler needs a nap at 2 PM. You know your partner hates "tourist traps." You know that you get bored by just lying around the beach all day, but hate to pack the day full of activities.

You hire an Intern (AI) to draft the itinerary, suggest hotels, and find the best routes based on your criteria.

Before your Intern gets to work, one important caveat. As discussed in Note #2, some standard AI models (like the free version of ChatGPT or Claude) are working from "frozen" memory. So unless you have live search enabled, your intern is working with outdated information. They know where the hotel is, but they don't know if it's currently under renovation. Always verify the critical details!



The Concept: The Prompt

The instruction you give to the AI is called a Prompt.

In the early days (way back in... 2023), this was hard. We called it “Prompt Engineering.” Early AI models were essentially very sophisticated autocomplete, they responded to the exact words you used, not what you actually meant (intent). So precise phrasing mattered: specific keywords, specific formatting, almost like “coding” the instruction. It was a technical skill.

The Evolution: Today, the models are smarter. You don’t need to be an engineer; you just need to be a clear communicator. However, “clear” doesn’t mean “short.”

Bad Prompt: “Plan a vacation.” (Too vague → Generic Result)

Good Prompt: “I am an Expert on my family’s needs. We hate crowds, love history, and need a nap at 2 PM. You’re my Intern, find options that fit these constraints.”

The Golden Rule: The AI can access to vast amount of data, but it has zero access to your brain. You must transfer your “Expert Intuition” into the Prompt.



The “Interview” Trick

If writing a long, detailed paragraph feels like homework, I have a trick for you.

Instead of struggling to come up with the perfect prompt, make the AI write it for you.

This is the ultimate collaboration between The Expert + The Intern.

Step 1: The Request

Instead:

“Help me plan an itinerary to [destination] for a family of four.”

Result: You get a generic plan: the same famous attractions, the same restaurants, the same Top 10 list the internet already gave you.

Super-charged planner:

“Act as a [luxury/family/...] travel agent. I want to plan a family trip to [destination], but I don’t want a generic itinerary. Do not generate a plan yet. First, ask me 10 questions about my family’s preferences, budget, and travel style. Once I answer them, use that information to build a tailored itinerary.”

Why this works: You force the Intern to stop guessing and start listening. You are transferring your Expert Knowledge into their system.

Step 2: The Response

Once you answer those 10 questions, the Intern gets to work. It scans the maps, cross-references flight times with your toddler’s nap schedule, and filters out the tourist traps you hate.

It hands you a draft. It’s 80% there, because you specified your preference.



The Reality Check

This is where the Intern needs you most. The Intern is fast, but blind to the physical world.

I asked Arlette (founder of House of Naéla, a boutique travel agency) what AI still fails to capture in travel planning. She explains:

“Beyond the well-known issue of hallucinations, AI simply cannot grasp the feel of a place; the vibe of a hotel or its surroundings. A room might have the same room description, but Room 23 has a better ocean view than Room 25. This is the knowledge an experienced travel advisor will bring in. A human travel designer also brings in the human touch, like a personalized note in the room, anticipating preferences, or being available when things go wrong. That human connection is often what turns a good trip into an exceptional one.”

The Lesson: Use the Intern for the “Admin” : brainstorming options, mapping routes, and drafting a first-pass itinerary. But don’t confuse a draft for truth: the Intern can’t reliably capture the feel of a place, or the small, high-impact details that change the whole experience. That’s where the human part matters: your judgment, your taste, and your willingness to sanity-check the details with real-world signals (maps, photos, recent reviews, and your own priorities).

Dinner Table Conversation

Starter: “If we could hire a super-fast intern to help us with one boring chore at home, what 3 rules would we give them so they don’t mess it up?” (This teaches our kids the concept of Constraints, the most important part of any Prompt.)

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