

• SINCE 1994

Choose the right AI  
tool.

*Use it right.*

STRIVE FORUM · PART 2 · MYLES BAI

**\*Tonight is a  
workshop,  
not a lecture.\***

Two short concept blocks.

Two hands-on labs.

One take-home checklist.

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Bring **one real task** from your business to test against.

# What we're answering tonight.

- Which AI tool do I pick for which task?
- Why does the same prompt give me four different answers from four different tools?
- How do I tell if an output is *good enough* for what I need?
- When is it worth paying ten times more for a smarter model?

## WHO THIS IS FOR

Solo founders and small teams choosing between **ChatGPT**, **Claude**, **Gemini**, **Copilot**, and the dozen other AI tools landing in your inbox every week, without an engineering team to tell you which one to use when.

# Green. Yellow. Red.

## THE SIX FLAWS THAT NEVER GO AWAY

- 01 Confidently wrong
- 02 Drift
- 03 No memory, no paper trail
- 04 Cost scales
- 05 Doesn't know your business
- 06 Privacy is your job

## GREEN, YELLOW, RED

**Green** · You can catch all six. Go.

**Yellow** · Gaps in one or two. Add a habit, then go.

**Red** · Too many gaps. Wait.

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If you missed Part 1, the deck is at [rexblack.com/resources/talks/strive-apr-2026](https://rexblack.com/resources/talks/strive-apr-2026).

THE QUESTION WE'RE ANSWERING TONIGHT

# Same task. *Five tools.* Which one do I pick?

A clean answer means **less money wasted**, **better output**,  
and **fewer surprises** at the end of the month.

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# The four questions every tool has to answer.

## CAPABILITY

*Is it smart enough for this task?*

## SPEED

*Is it fast enough for how I'll use it?*

## COST

*Is the price reasonable for the value?*

## TRUST

*Can I rely on it, or do I have to re-check every output?*

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Every AI tool is a tradeoff across these four. **Nothing is best on all of them at once.**

# Three buckets. *Pick the cheapest one that works.*

TIER	WHEN TO USE IT	REAL TOOLS TODAY	ROUGHLY
<b>Quick &amp; cheap</b>	Drafts, summaries, FAQs, routine email, simple data cleanup, social posts. Things where a bad answer costs you nothing.	ChatGPT (free / 4o-mini), Claude Haiku, Gemini Flash	Cents per task
<b>Stronger thinker</b>	Strategy, complex analysis, proposal writing, business planning, "help me think through this."	ChatGPT Plus (4o / 5), Claude Sonnet, Gemini Pro	A few cents to a quarter per task
<b>Top-tier or verified</b>	Customer-facing, revenue-impacting, compliance-sensitive, legal review, anything that goes out under your name.	Claude Opus, GPT-5 with retrieval, specialist tools (Harvey, Casetext), or <i>human-checked</i> output	Dollars per task

The rule: **start with the cheapest tier that does the job.** Move up only when the cheap tier visibly fails on your task.

# 30x

COST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE  
CHEAPEST MODEL AND THE  
MOST EXPENSIVE, ON THE SAME  
TASK, WITH THE SAME PROMPT.

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# Same prompt. *Different output.*

**Prompt:** "Write a follow-up email to a prospect who went quiet for two weeks."

QUICK & CHEAP

"Hi {Name}, following up on our conversation from two weeks ago. Wanted to see if you had any questions. Let me know!"

*Generic. Fine. Sounds like AI wrote it.*

STRONGER THINKER

"{Name}, you mentioned {concern} last time. I came across {data point} this week, made me think of you. Worth a 15-minute call, or want the one-page version?"

*Specific. References your earlier note. Two ways to say yes.*

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Same prompt, same word count. **Completely different** output. *Worth the extra cost on your task?*

# Compare the models *yourself.*

[rexblack.com/labs/compare-models](https://rexblack.com/labs/compare-models)

Pick a task from your business. Run the same prompt against three models. Look at the cost, the time, and the output side by side.

# What did you see?

## TALK US THROUGH

- Which tools did you compare?
- What was the **cheapest** that did your task acceptably?
- Where did the **expensive** tool actually add value?
- Where did the cheap tool quietly fail?

## PATTERNS WE USUALLY SEE

- For drafts, summaries, and routine writing, the cheap tier is **good enough 80 percent of the time.**
- For strategy, analysis, and anything with judgment, the stronger tier is **noticeably better** and worth the 5x to 10x cost.
- For revenue-impacting output, you almost always need *human review*, regardless of tier.

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*"Good enough" is not the same as "best."* For most small-business tasks, *good enough* is the right target.

# Four questions for every AI output.

- 01 **Useful** · Does it actually do my specific task? Not "in general." For *this* task.
  - 02 **Fast enough** · Can I get the answer in the time I have? Two seconds, two minutes, two hours, they're all valid, but I have to know which.
  - 03 **Worth it** · Is the cost reasonable for what I get back?
  - 04 **Trustworthy** · Can I send this output without checking, or do I need to read every line first?
- 

The fourth one is the most important and the most ignored.

# Three real tasks. *Graded.*

TASK	USEFUL?	FAST ENOUGH?	WORTH IT?	TRUSTWORTHY?	RECOMMENDATION
<b>Draft a weekly customer newsletter</b>	Yes, cheap tier	Yes, seconds	Yes, cents	<i>You read it before sending</i>	<b>Green</b> · Quick & cheap tier. Five-second review.
<b>Write a \$50K proposal for a new client</b>	Yes, stronger tier needed	Yes, minutes	Yes, a quarter	<i>Heavy edit pass required</i>	<b>Yellow</b> · Stronger thinker. Two-hour review. Use as a structured first draft, not final.
<b>Auto-reply to a customer complaint</b>	<i>Risky</i> across all tiers	Yes, seconds	Yes, cents	<i>No, not without review</i>	<b>Red until reworked</b> · Don't auto-send. Use it to <i>draft</i> a reply for you, then send manually.

Same rubric. Three different answers. **Each one tells you something specific to do.**

# Where each tier *actually shows up* in a small business.

## QUICK & CHEAP, THE WORKHORSE

- Routine customer email drafts
- Meeting and call summaries
- Internal SOP first drafts
- Cleaning up notes or transcripts
- Naming an offer or product
- Reformatting data
- "Translate this into plain English for me"

## STRONGER THINKER, THE ANALYST

- Proposal writing
- Strategy and positioning
- Pricing exercises
- "What questions am I not asking?"
- Business plan sections
- Competitive analysis
- Job description writing

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## TOP-TIER OR VERIFIED, THE SPECIALIST

Customer-facing chat or voice agents · contract or compliance review · medical / legal / financial content · anything that *goes out under your name* without your eyes on it first. This tier needs **engineering or verification you don't have yet**. That's fine. *Phase 2*.

# What *is* an AI agent?

[rexblack.com/labs/agent-anatomy](https://rexblack.com/labs/agent-anatomy)

Click through the six layers that make up an agent. See what each one does, what breaks without it, and which tools cover which piece.

# "Is this an agent, or is it a clever workflow?"

## A WORKFLOW

The steps are pre-written. The AI fills in one or two of them. Predictable. Cheap to run. Easy to debug. **Most "AI tools" you'll buy are this.**

## AN AGENT

The AI itself decides what to do next, using tools it picks. Powerful. Expensive. Harder to predict. *Worth it only when the workflow can't handle the variability.*

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For most small-business tasks, a **workflow with one good prompt** is the right answer, not an agent.

# The decision checklist.

Tape this to your monitor. Run it against every task you're tempted to automate.

- 01 **Color it.** Green, Yellow, or Red? (Part 1 framework.) Stop here if Red.
- 02 **Pick the tier.** Quick & cheap, stronger thinker, or top-tier verified?
- 03 **Grade the output.** Useful? Fast enough? Worth it? Trustworthy?
- 04 **Pick the review step.** Auto-send, quick read, heavy edit, or human-only?
- 05 **Set a spend cap.** Day one. In the tool's billing settings. *Don't skip this.*
- 06 **Two-week tally.** How often does the draft go out clean? Where does it fail?
- 07 **Reassess monthly.** New model dropped? Free tier got smarter? Cheaper tier may now beat the one you're paying for.

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If you can do steps 1 to 4 in under sixty seconds, you've internalized the framework. If you can't, run it again on the next task until you can.

# *One task. This week.*

Pick one task from your business you're going to run through the checklist this week.

- *What is the task?*
  - *What tier did you decide on?*
  - *What's the human review step?*
  - *What does success look like at two weeks?*
- 

We'll go around. **Two minutes a person.** Not for show, this is how the framework gets sticky.

REMEMBER

# *Three things from tonight.*

ONE

Every AI tool trades **capability, speed, cost, and trust**. Nothing is best on all four. Pick the cheapest tier that works.

TWO

Run every output through **four questions**. Useful, fast enough, worth it, trustworthy. The fourth one is the one most people skip.

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THREE

Most "AI agents" you'll be pitched are **workflows with one prompt**. They're fine, they're just not magic, and they shouldn't cost agent-level prices. Ask why a workflow isn't enough before you say yes.

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KEEP GOING

# *Resources we built for you.*

## HANDS-ON LABS

- **Compare 13 models side by side** · [rexblack.com/labs/compare-models](https://rexblack.com/labs/compare-models)
- **What is an AI agent?** · [rexblack.com/labs/agent-anatomy](https://rexblack.com/labs/agent-anatomy)

## THIS TALK + PART 1

- **Tonight's talk** · [rexblack.com/resources/talks/strive-may-2026](https://rexblack.com/resources/talks/strive-may-2026)
- **Part 1, the six flaws** · [rexblack.com/resources/talks/strive-apr-2026](https://rexblack.com/resources/talks/strive-apr-2026)

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## THE ARTICLE BEHIND THE FRAMEWORK

- **Choosing the right model (and knowing when to switch)** · [rexblack.com/resources/writing/ai-model-selection-framework](https://rexblack.com/resources/writing/ai-model-selection-framework)
- **Workflow or agent?** · [rexblack.com/resources/writing/workflow-or-agent](https://rexblack.com/resources/writing/workflow-or-agent)
- **Starting AI adoption (six stages)** · [rexblack.com/resources/writing/ai-adoption-sequence](https://rexblack.com/resources/writing/ai-adoption-sequence)

## REAL PRODUCTION EXAMPLES

- **AI-powered services intake** · [rexblack.com/case-studies/ai-veteran-intake](https://rexblack.com/case-studies/ai-veteran-intake)

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# Thank you.

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