

DECEMBER 4, 2025



Public Affairs
Council

AI Fundamentals for Public Affairs

Principles, prompting & use cases

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL PROFILE



PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

1954
founded

14 000
individuals

750+
total members

≈ 130
events/year

WASHINGTON
BRUSSELS

office locations

NONPARTISAN
NONPOLITICAL

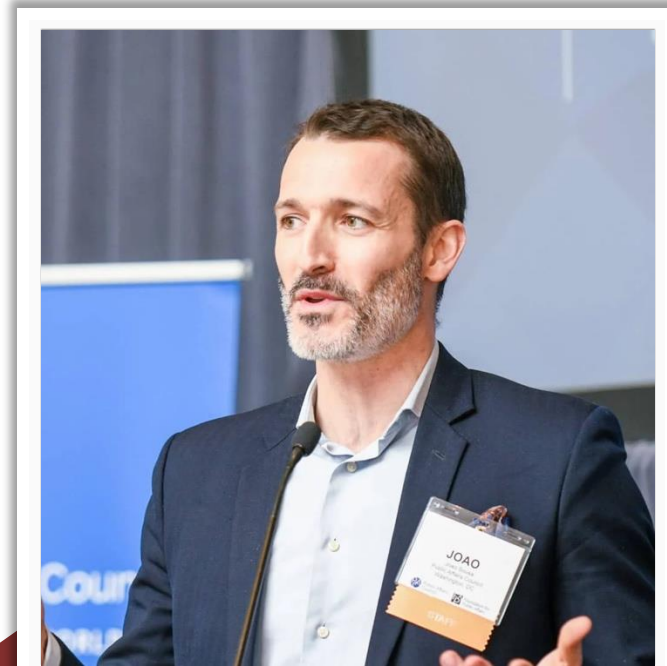
politics

23

total
staff



Your speaker



JOAO SOUSA
MANAGING DIRECTOR EUROPE
& GLOBAL PRACTICE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Agenda

SESSION 1: Mastering the Fundamentals

- Principles of using of AI for Public Affairs
- Benchmarking your efforts
- The structure of a good prompt
- Use cases of AI in PA – International examples
- Ideas for an AI adoption roadmap

Session takeaways

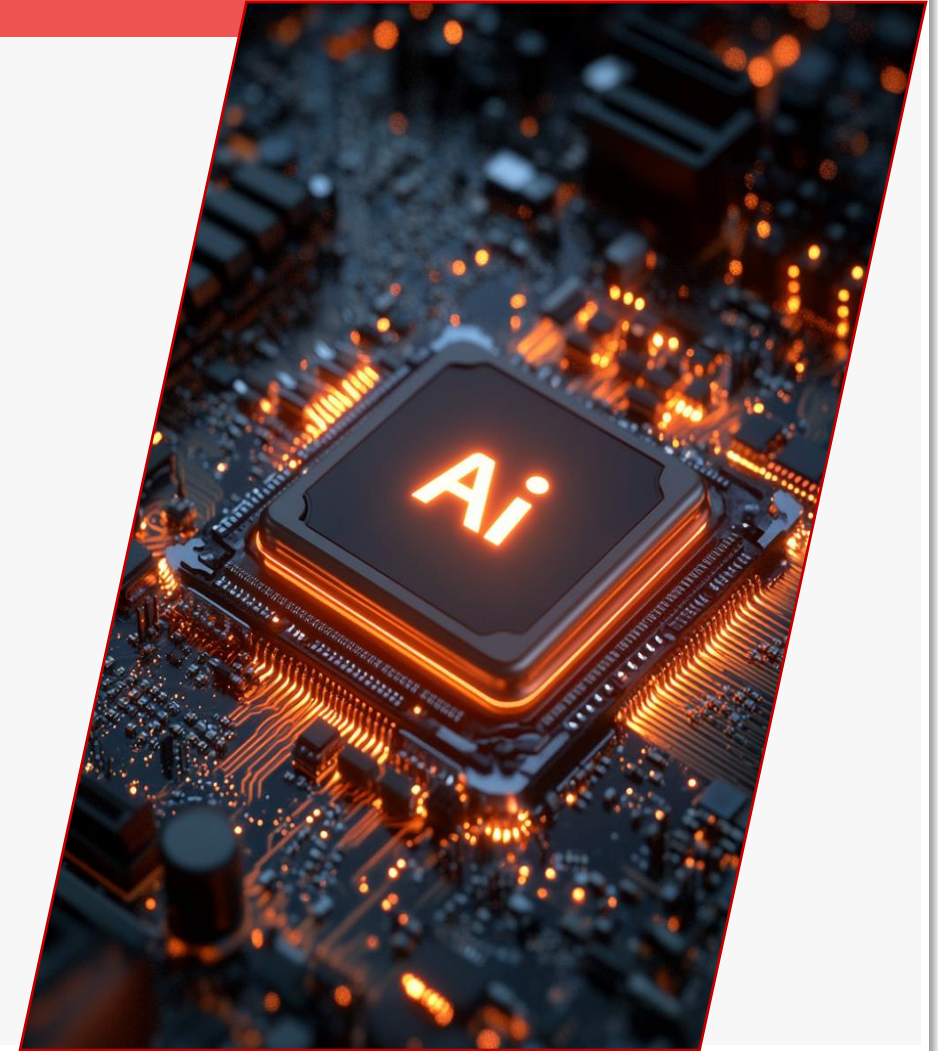
By the end of this session, you'll be better equipped to:

- Follow the principles of AI for public affairs and good prompting*
- Benchmark your team's AI use and readiness against peers*
- Through AI use cases get inspiration on tools, prompts and uses*
- Ideas for an internal AI adoption roadmap*

Key Principles for Using AI Effectively

- ***Principle 1 – Always invite AI to the table***
- ***Principle 2 – Be the human in the loop***
- ***Principle 3 – Treat AI like a person***
- ***Principle 4 – It's an iterative process***
- ***Principle 5 – Assume AI will only get better***

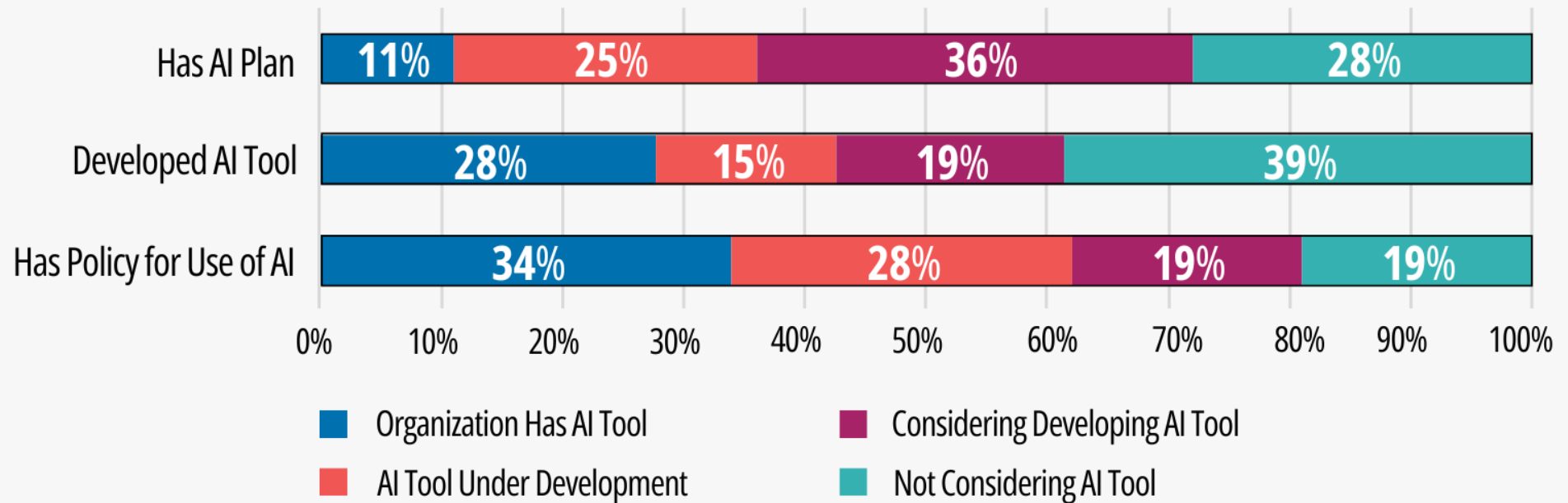
Source: Adapted from Ethan Mollick: "Co-Intelligence"



1. Benchmarking your efforts

How are your peers using AI?

How your peers are using AI (Europe)



Source: Public Affairs Council, "State of European Public Affairs benchmarking survey", 2025

2. The structure of a good prompt

How to communicate with your AI?

The 4 steps of a good prompt – “R.O.C.K.”

Step 1: Attribute a Role/persona

Step 2: Explain the Objective/task

Step 3: Define the Context & audience

Step 4: Specify Key output formatting

The 4 steps of a good prompt – Role/Persona

1. Role/persona

Tell the AI who it should be or what situation it is in.

Example: *"You are a European public affairs strategist advising a company on the EU Green Agenda."*

The 4 steps of a good prompt – Objective/Task

2. Objective/task

Clearly state what you want it to do (write, summarize, analyze, compare, etc.).

Example: *"Summarize the key implications of the EU Green Agenda for non-EU manufacturers."*

The 4 steps of a good prompt – Context/audience

3. Context & audience

Give it the necessary background or constraints and define your audience.

Example: *"The context is the company's annual meeting, and the audience is a group of 100+ government relations professionals with limited technical background."*

The 4 steps of a good prompt – Key output format

4. Key output formatting & style

Describe how you want the result delivered, both in terms of format (list, table, email draft, talking points) and style (tone, length, data points).

Example: *“Present your answer as a 3-bullet summary followed by a short paragraph with key messages.”*

Example 1

1. You are the speechwriter for the President of a company [insert specifics]. 2. Suggest 10 ideas for highlighting the impact of the EU Green Agenda in your sector for the President's annual speech 3. to an audience of Board members, corporate CEOs and other senior business leaders attending this conference 4. in the format of bullet points, followed by a one paragraph explanation for each.

Example 2

1. You are the Director for Public Affairs in an association [insert specifics] 2. Your task is to provide an executive summary of the organization's manifesto (attached) 4. of around 300 words in paragraph format 2. highlighting key priorities. 3. The document will be distributed among government officials and international media.
4. The language should be concise and jargon-free.

The 'How': Speaking AI-ish effectively

- ✓ **Be specific, not polite.** Precision beats niceness.
- ✓ **Iterate.** The first answer is rarely the best — refine your prompt and ask again.
- ✓ **Add examples.** Showing the AI what “good” looks like dramatically improves results.
- ✓ **Set boundaries.** Tell it what *not* to do (e.g., “Avoid policy jargon” or “Don’t speculate.”).
- ✓ **Create sections.** If your request is long or complex, break it into clear sections like "Your task", "Example", etc. This helps the AI follow your logic and deliver more accurate results.
- ✓ **Make it human-centric.** Your next step: how can we make this output human-centric, i.e. ensure the human/team is the “thought-Leader” and decision-maker.

3. Sample use cases of AI

Using AI to solve concrete public affairs problems

Act as the challenger or devil's advocate

The problem/challenge: You need to deliver a speech in a technical forum. You want to focus on three key ideas build a narrative/argument around those ideas that is consistent with your strategy, key messages and EU policy orientations.

How AI can help:

- Step 1) Upload the key documents you want to use as a reference onto your AI and prompt it to **create a 5-7-minutes intervention around your 3 key ideas**. Ask it to use the supporting documents attached for technical details and provide one example for each main idea.
- Step 2) After perfecting the speech, prompt AI to **act as devil's advocate** (or NGO/journalist), identify the weaker arguments and suggest counter-arguments.

Unlock the power within (you)

The problem/challenge: You want to anticipate feedback and stress-test a memo to board members about public affairs achievements in 2025 and plans for 2026, so it's clear on impact, strategic alignment and resources.

How AI can help:

- Upload the strategy memo and any supporting materials.
- Ask the AI to **interview you – one question at a time – about board expectations** and afterwards provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of your memo. Prompt it to propose edits that sharpen clarity and support the business case for your “ask”.
- Ask the AI to **interview you again to better understand the personality** and concerns of one specific leader, and **anticipate questions/criticism you can expect** from him/her.

Uncover biases in your strategic plan

The problem/challenge: Your team just drafted a stakeholder engagement plan to advance a specific policy initiative, and you want to stress-test that plan to identify any biases, assumptions and potential challenges you might face.

How AI can help:

- Upload the plan and **ask the AI to interview you** – one question at a time (up to 10) – to identify hidden assumptions, risks, and blind spots.
- **Ask the AI to play devil's advocate or challenger** (a sceptical legislator, an NGO, a journalist) and identify 5 challenging questions they might ask to challenge your strategy.

Make the process human-centric

The problem/challenge: Your team is reacting to many potential policy goals across environment, digitalisation, competition, and social areas, making it difficult to identify key priorities.

How AI can help:

- Upload key documents (internal strategy documents, EU policy roadmaps) onto your AI tool.
- **Make the process human- and team-centric** by prompting the AI to ask you 20 questions (one by one) your team can use to guide an internal brainstorming session or internal discussions on which 5 priorities to select for 2026.

Act as a focus group

The problem/challenge: Your team wants to simulate the reactions of a group of MEPs to one of its policy proposals so as to finetune key messages and prepare for possible questions ahead of a meeting.

How AI can help:

- Step 1) Prompt the AI to **conduct a deep search to list these profiles**, using as sources EU institution websites, EU reports and websites, media and news reports, asking new items to receive higher weight.
- Step 2) Prompt AI to **act as a policy analyst and summarize the views of MEPs** on that piece of legislation. Identify key profiles by asking your AI to create a visual comparison of MEPs based on their legislative influence, openness to collaborate and conditions for possible support.
- Step 3) **Zoom in on one specific MEP** and prompt AI to ask specific questions he/she might ask, test responses and suggest meeting talking points.

4. Integrating AI into your workflows

Roadmap ideas for team adoption

Starting with “WHY”?

1. **WHY does your PA team need AI? Identify repeated tasks, time gains and impact.**
2. Set up a task force of internal champions who spend X% time leading efforts, creating a roadmap and helping others
3. Make AI experimentation and learning compulsory, and encourage sharing of ideas (use cases, helpful prompts, etc)
4. Emphasize human oversight and expertise and develop “living” internal AI use guidelines
5. Integrate AI metrics in your broader definition of success (as identified in your PA strategy)

AI Task Force & internal champions

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Encouraging experimentation

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Human oversight & internal guidelines

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Measuring impact

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4. Emphasize human oversight and expertise and develop “living” internal AI use guidelines
5. **Integrate AI metrics in your broader definition of success (as identified in your PA strategy)**

4. To conclude

AI for Public Affairs – Do's and Don'ts

✓ Do's	✗ Don'ts
Apply the anatomy of a good prompt : be specific about persona, audience, purpose, and format.	Don't expect perfect answers from AI on the first try; iterate and engage with the tool.
Combine AI output with human insight and expertise for alignment and validation. Human-AI collaboration and alternation yield best results.	Don't rely on AI for strategic judgment or final decision-making without human review.
Use AI to speed up early drafts, overcome “blank-page” syndrome, do edits, and create summaries to save time.	Don't share confidential or sensitive information with AI tools (except your own).
Split complex projects into concrete smaller tasks before delegating to AI.	Don't delegate complex assignments to AI without breaking them down first.
Experiment with prompts and use multiple AI tools to get diverse outputs.	Don't assume AI has up-to-date knowledge of the latest policy developments.
Always review, fact-check, and ask for sources to ensure traceability and trustworthiness. Trust in PA is everything.	Don't fully rely on AI outputs without verification due to risks of hallucinations. YOU are the expert.
Invest time daily to learn, experiment , and perfect the art of prompting (“garbage in, garbage out”). Experimentation and daily learning is the new mindset.	Don't expect AI use to be straightforward; it requires continuous learning and mindset shift.
Use AI as a support tool , not a shortcut for organizational consensus or decision-making.	Don't assume all team members are equally comfortable or optimistic about AI adoption.

QUESTIONS?



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