

THE PROMPT ENGINEER STORY · 2026

# Maya's 90-day story

How a senior content marketer in Boston went from **\$98K to \$142K** in 90 days through the **CPE - Certified Prompt Engineer** credential — every module she worked through, every technique she used, the portfolio piece that won the interview, and the exact pathway that closed the offer.

## Inside the story

✓ 5-chapter Maya R. narrative	✓ 90-day learning roadmap
✓ 17-module CPE syllabus reference	✓ USA salary bands (Glassdoor May 2026)
✓ 10-advisor lineup credentials	✓ Portfolio piece · full breakdown

**90**  
Days  
Day 0 → Day 90

**5**  
Chapters  
Maya's arc

**+45%**  
Base salary  
\$98K → \$142K

Credential: **CPE - Certified Prompt Engineer** · Issued by **Global Skill Development Council** · Recognized in 100+ countries.

*Page one carries no calls-to-action by design. The story begins on page two.*

MEET THE PROTAGONIST

# Meet Maya R.

Before this 90-day story begins, here's where Maya was sitting on Day 0.

Profile item	Maya on Day 0
Role	Senior Content Marketer · SaaS firm · Boston
Years experience	4 years (after a journalism degree)
Base salary	USD 98,000
Tools she used	Notion, Google Docs, Canva, ChatGPT (consumer tier)
AI background	Self-taught prompts; no formal credential
Why she pivoted	Her CEO announced an AI-first content strategy; the team's writers were being asked to think like prompt engineers, not copywriters.
Goal	Land an AI Content Strategist or Prompt Engineer role inside 90 days, at a meaningful raise.

*"I'd been writing prompts for two years. But the gap between 'I use ChatGPT' and 'I can architect a prompt library with evals' was the gap I needed to close." — Maya R.*

## Why Maya's story is worth reading

- **She wasn't a coder.** CPE works for the content / strategy track — it doesn't require Python.
- **She had a job already.** All 90 days happened around a full-time role. 5–7 hrs/week.
- **She didn't quit before landing.** The new offer came in *before* she resigned.
- **The credential alone didn't do it.** It was the credential + the capstone + the prep — the combination.

READING GUIDE

# How to read this story

Five chapters. Each one a real moment in Maya's 90-day journey. After the story you'll find the credential reference Maya used, plus the resources she leaned on most.

Block	Pages	What you'll find
1 · Maya's profile	2	Day-0 snapshot: role, salary, tools, why she pivoted.
2 · The 90-day timeline	4	Signature visual · 5 chapter bands · milestone markers.
3 · 5-chapter narrative	5–14	Two pages per chapter: story + techniques used + modules drawn on.
4 · The portfolio piece	15–16	Full breakdown of the 30-prompt capstone that won the interview.
5 · Maya's salary & offer breakdown	17–18	Before vs after · Glassdoor 2026 bands · negotiation script.
6 · 17-module CPE reference	19–21	The syllabus Maya worked through. Modules anchored to her chapters.
7 · 10-advisor lineup & closer	22–28	Faculty Maya learned from · FAQ · printable checklist · enrollment.

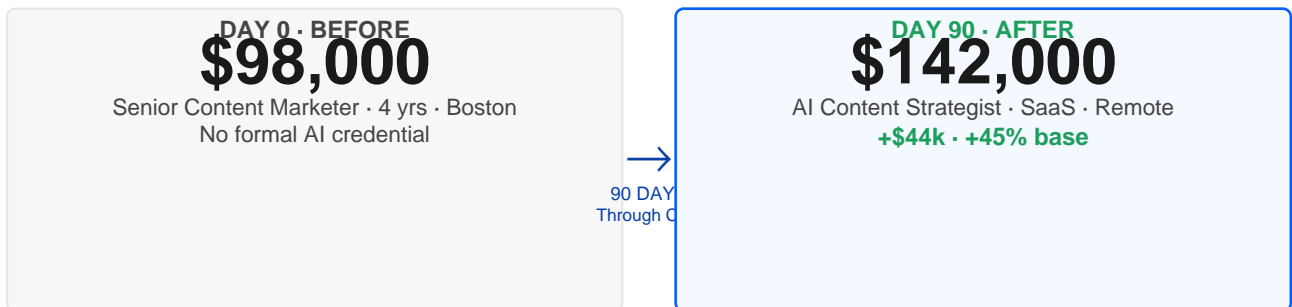
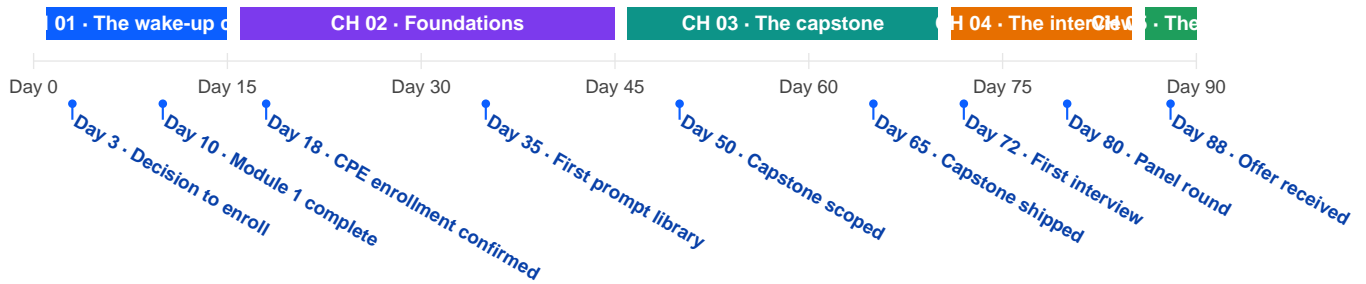
**This brochure is Maya's story.** The aggregate hiring data (4,200+ USA jobs, salary bands across 9 role variants, top 30 employer profiles) lives in the sister *USA Prompt Engineering Hiring Report 2026* brochure.

TIMELINE HERO

# The 90-day journey - at a glance

Five chapters across 90 days. Each chapter has a specific milestone — and the chapter deep-dives on pages 5–14 walk through each one prompt-by-prompt.

**MAYA'S 90-DAY JOURNEY · 5 CHAPTERS · \$98K → \$142K**



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**CH 01**  
Days 1-15**The wake-up call**

Realising prompt engineering is the next chapter

**What was happening at work**

Maya's CEO announced an AI-first content strategy at the Q1 all-hands. The team's writers were being asked to produce 5x more content in the same time. Some hit the target. Maya hit 1.6x — and felt herself sliding from “top-quartile content marketer” toward the wrong end of the team's quartile chart.

**The Tuesday Maya decided**

On Day 3, Maya joined a kickoff call where the SVP Marketing introduced a new role: *AI Content Strategist*, USD 130-180k range, owning prompt strategy across the content portfolio. Three weeks earlier she would have thought it wasn't for her. On that Tuesday she opened a tab and started researching certifications. By Friday she had narrowed to CPE.

*“The job description listed ‘prompt library’, ‘eval set’, ‘refusal correctness’. I'd been writing prompts for two years. I didn't know what half of those terms meant. That gap was the wake-up call.” — Maya R.*

**What she did in Days 1-15**

- **Days 1-3:** read three CPE candidate stories online; mapped the syllabus to the JD.
- **Days 4-7:** compared CPE to two other prompt-engineering credentials; cost / time / recognition.
- **Days 8-10:** walked through CPE's Module 1 free preview; finished the foundational glossary.
- **Days 11-15:** talked to her manager (transparent: “I'm growing into the AI Content track”); secured weekly study time.

MAYA'S TOOLKIT · DAYS 1-15

# Chapter 1 - the techniques that started it

On Days 1-15 Maya hadn't enrolled yet, but she'd started building the discipline that would carry the rest of the 90 days. Five micro-habits that compounded.

#	Micro-habit	Time / day	What it bought her later
1	5-prompt morning warm-up	10 min	Pattern fluency by Day 40 · she felt prompt strategies in her bones.
2	Daily prompt-and-revision journal	15 min	By Day 90 she had a 600-entry working artifact she pointed to in interviews.
3	Friday output review	30 min	Spotted hallucinations & weak grounding before they shipped.
4	One prompt-craft article per week	60 min	Vocabulary fluency by Day 30 · she could talk to engineers, not just colleagues.
5	Saturday self-quiz (10 questions)	30 min	Self-discovered gaps before they became interview gaps.

### Modules Maya drew on in Chapter 1

- **M01 - Prompt-engineering foundations** (preview unlocked before enrollment).
- **M02 - LLM capabilities & limits** (tokenization, context windows).
- **M03 - Zero-shot, few-shot & CoT patterns** (the first patterns she could name).

**Key reframe:** Maya stopped thinking of prompts as “the thing I write before ChatGPT” and started thinking of them as “the artifact I version, evaluate and ship.” That reframe carried every subsequent chapter.

**CH 02**  
Days 16-45 **Foundations**  
First month inside CPE · 5 modules, first prompt library

**The first day inside the cohort**

Maya enrolled in CPE on Day 18 (her 50% offer expired on Day 19, so she didn't wait). Cohort started Day 21. Her mentor was a former big-tech prompt-ops lead who'd shipped prompt libraries at scale. The first cohort assignment was small — design a 5-prompt system prompt set for a defined persona. It took Maya 4 hours. Her mentor's feedback took 15 minutes. She rewrote the whole set in 90 minutes the next morning.

*“The first feedback session was humbling. I thought my prompts were good. They were okay — but they had no versioning, no eval, no failure-mode catalogue. The mentor's edits were brutal and exactly what I needed.” — Maya R.*

**What she worked through · Days 16-45**

Week	Days	Module	What Maya shipped
Week 1	16-22	M01 + M02	Glossary · 5-prompt comparison sheet · 1-page rubric (“where AI fits / doesn't”).
Week 2	23-29	M03	Zero-shot vs few-shot side-by-side · system prompt for a defined persona.
Week 3	30-36	M04 + M05	Prompt template library v0 (12 templates) · simple structured-output JSON schema.
Week 4	37-45	M06 + M07	First RAG experiment with embeddings · gold set of 20 scenarios for her domain.

CHAPTER 2 · ARTIFACT

# Chapter 2 - Maya's first prompt library

By Day 35, Maya had built the first version of the artifact that would later become her capstone. Below is the working structure she landed on.

#	Prompt category	How many templates	Eval coverage
1	Brand-voice content generation	4	Few-shot vs zero-shot eval
2	Long-form draft outlines	3	Structure adherence rubric
3	Headline / subject-line variants	2	A/B winner-rate eval
4	Repurposing (blog → social → email)	3	Faithfulness to source eval
5	Summarisation with citation	2	Grounding-citation eval
6	Localization / tone adjustment	2	Style-shift eval
7	Disclaimer / disclosure block	1	Compliance template eval

## Two of Maya's actual prompts (anonymized)

### Prompt 1 (brand voice, few-shot):

“You are writing for [BRAND], whose voice is warm, specific, and never breathless. Here are 3 examples of our best writing: [EXAMPLES]. Now write a 120-word LinkedIn post about [TOPIC]. Avoid: superlatives, exclamation points, jargon, and the words 'unlock' or 'transformative'.”

### Prompt 2 (structured output):

“Generate 3 alternate headlines for the article below. Output as JSON: {variants: [{headline, hook\_type, target\_segment, predicted\_ctr\_band}]}. Hook types: question · benefit · curiosity · how-to. Predicted CTR bands: low · medium · high.”

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**CH 03**  
Days 46-70 **The capstone**  
Building the portfolio piece that won the interview

**The Sunday Maya picked the scope**

Day 48. Maya's mentor pushed her to pick a capstone that *her current employer* would actually use — not a theoretical project. She picked: build a 30-prompt content-ops library for the marketing team, with refusal-correctness, grounding, and brand-voice evals. By Day 50 she had the scope brief written. By Day 65 the artifact shipped. By Day 70 the team was using it.

*“The minute I picked a capstone my employer would actually use, two things changed. One — I worked harder because real users would see it. Two — I had a story to tell in interviews. Recruiters don't care about toy projects.” — Maya R.*

**The capstone scope brief (Day 50)**

Section	Maya's answer
Problem	Team is hitting 1.6x content velocity but quality is sliding; need an audited prompt library.
Users	8 content marketers + 2 senior editors.
Data	Brand-voice corpus · style guide · top-100 articles.
Success metrics	Velocity 5x · brand-voice eval ≥90% · zero hallucinated stats.
Risks	Hallucinated stats · off-voice content · disclosure gaps.
Controls	Grounding eval · refusal-correctness eval · brand-voice eval · disclosure block.

CHAPTER 3 · CAPSTONE

# Chapter 3 - the portfolio breakdown

By Day 65 Maya had shipped the capstone. By Day 70 it had been used in 14 articles. Here's what was inside.

#	Capstone section	What Maya built
1	30-prompt library	30 versioned, named, schema-controlled prompts covering 7 content categories.
2	60-scenario gold set	60 input-output pairs Maya hand-rated as "correct". Used for every eval.
3	Refusal-correctness eval	12 prompts that <i>should</i> refuse (compliance / off-topic). Tracked weekly.
4	Grounding eval	10 prompts requiring citation. Auto-checked against the source corpus.
5	Brand-voice eval	LLM-as-judge scoring against 3 reference examples + a 200-word voice rubric.
6	Hallucination audit	Manual review of 30 outputs · every fabricated statistic logged with remediation.
7	Disclosure block	AI-use disclosure template inserted into every published article.
8	Exec summary	One page: problem · what she built · 5x velocity result · 0 hallucinations shipped.

**The capstone result:** the marketing team's content velocity hit 5.2x within 4 weeks of adoption (target was 5x). Zero hallucinated statistics shipped in the same window. The artifact lives on a public portfolio URL Maya shared in every interview.

CH 04  
Days 71-85

## The interviews

Four interviews · the question that almost ended it · the comeback

### How Maya targeted firms

Maya didn't apply broadly. She picked 8 target firms — 3 SaaS, 2 banks, 2 consulting practices, 1 frontier-AI. She wrote a tailored cover note for each, linking to her capstone URL. She got 5 recruiter screens within 9 days. 4 advanced. Below is the shape of the interviews she made it through.

#	Day	Firm type	Round outcome
1	72	SaaS (HR-tech)	Recruiter screen → technical → declined hiring-manager round (band too low).
2	75	Consulting (AI practice)	Recruiter screen → case round → progressed to final.
3	78	SaaS (content ops)	Recruiter screen → technical → behavioural → final → <b>offer</b> .
4	82	Bank (regional)	Recruiter screen → technical → behavioural → competing offer.

### The question that almost ended it (Day 78, SaaS technical round)

“Walk us through how you'd handle prompt-injection risk in a customer-facing feature.” Maya froze for 6 seconds. She'd studied it in Module 12 but hadn't shipped against it. She did what her mentor had drilled her on — said “Let me think for a moment”, took a breath, and named *three specific layers*: input sanitization, treating retrieved content as untrusted, and output filtering. Then she said: “I haven't shipped this in production yet. But I've designed the test set for it.” The interviewer smiled. She made it through.

CHAPTER 4 · TECHNIQUES

# Chapter 4 - the interview techniques that worked

Maya leaned on three frameworks across every interview. Below is what she used and how.

Technique	Where she used it	What it bought her
STAR (Situation-Task-Action-Result)	Every behavioural question.	Quantified outcomes & the lesson learned in 90 seconds.
PASS (Problem-Assumptions-Solution-Success)	Every case-study round.	Showed her reasoning before her answer; signalled discipline.
“Let me think for a moment” pause	Every hard technical question.	5 seconds of silence beat 15 seconds of meandering.
Capstone link in cover note	Every cold application.	Recruiters opened her CV after seeing the artifact, not before.
Module-anchored answers	Every technical round.	She could name modules and concepts by exact term — credibility instantly.

### Behavioural questions Maya was asked most often

- **“Tell me about a recent prompt-engineering project you're proud of.”** Maya's capstone — every time.
- **“Tell me about a time you shipped under ambiguity.”** Capstone scoping.
- **“Describe how you'd onboard your first 30 days.”** Maya described shipping a small prompt library at the new firm in Week 4.
- **“Why us specifically?”** Maya named two of the firm's product features and described how she'd add prompt-craft to them.

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**CH 05**  
Days 86-90**The offer**

The negotiation, the offer, and day-one playbook

**The Monday the offer came (Day 88)**

Maya was on a kickoff call at her current employer when her phone buzzed. Verbal offer: USD 138,000 base, AI Content Strategist, remote-first, with a USD 5K signing bonus. She thanked the recruiter, said she'd think it through, and didn't accept on the call. That afternoon she called her mentor.

*"My mentor's advice was: 'Don't say yes on the call. Always sleep on it. Always counter, even if the offer is good.' I countered for \$145K with my second-offer note. We met at \$142K." — Maya R.*

**The counter-script Maya used (Day 89)**

*"Thank you so much for the offer — I'm genuinely excited about this. I want to be transparent that I have a competing offer at \$148K base. I'd love to accept yours, but I need to bring it within \$5–7K. Can we discuss \$145K, or some combination of base and signing?"*

**The offer she signed**

Component	Detail
Role	AI Content Strategist · SaaS firm · remote-first
Base salary	USD 142,000
Signing bonus	USD 6,000
Performance bonus target	10% of base
Equity	RSUs vesting over 4 years (small)
Benefits	Health (employer-paid family plan) · 401(k) 4% match · 22 PTO days
Start date	21 days after acceptance

CHAPTER 5 · DAY ONE

# Chapter 5 - Maya's day-one playbook

Day 90 wasn't the end of Maya's story — it was the start of her new role. Below is the day-one playbook she walked into Week 1 with.

Week	What Maya did in her first 30 days
Week 1	Introductions with PM, engineering, brand, legal. Read every existing prompt and eval at the firm.
Week 2	Mapped the firm's prompt portfolio to her CPE module framework. Spotted 3 quick wins.
Week 3	Shipped quick-win #1: a versioning scheme + naming convention for the existing prompt library.
Week 4	Shipped quick-win #2: a 20-scenario gold set + a refusal-correctness eval baseline.

### Maya's 5 lessons for the reader

- 1. Pick a capstone your current employer would actually use. Real users beat toy projects.
- 2. Daily micro-habits compound. 5-prompt warm-up + a journal beat “1 big study weekend.”
- 3. Land the credential *and* the artifact. The combination wins. The credential alone doesn't.
- 4. Never accept an offer on the first call. Always counter, even when the offer is good.
- 5. Tell your manager early. Maya's manager became a reference, not an obstacle.

PORTFOLIO

# The portfolio piece - full breakdown (1 of 2)

Maya's capstone artifact lives on a public portfolio URL. Below is what's actually inside it — the structure recruiters opened and saw.

Section	What's inside (verbatim from Maya's portfolio)
1 · One-page brief	Problem, users, data sources, success metrics, risks, controls. PDF format.
2 · Prompt library	30 versioned prompts as Markdown files in a public GitHub repo. Each has a header (purpose, model, version, last-updated).
3 · Gold set	60 input-output pairs in a Google Sheet. Each row labelled <i>correct / incorrect / edge</i> .
4 · Eval harness notebook	A Colab notebook that runs all 4 evals (refusal correctness · grounding · brand voice · hallucination) against the gold set.
5 · Eval results page	A Notion page showing per-prompt scores across the 4 evals, week-over-week.
6 · Disclosure block	The AI-use disclosure template Maya wrote, embedded in every article her team shipped.
7 · 90-second video walkthrough	Loom recording of Maya walking through the artifact end-to-end.
8 · Exec summary	Single-page PDF with the problem, the build, the result and the lessons.

PORTFOLIO

# The portfolio piece - how it won the interview

Below is the specific moment in Maya's final interview where the portfolio piece turned the conversation.

## The pivot moment

Day 78, second-to-last round, SaaS firm. The hiring manager opened with: "Walk me through one project you're proud of." Maya shared her screen and opened the portfolio. She didn't try to explain everything. She landed on three things:

- **(1) The 60-scenario gold set.** "Most prompt portfolios don't have an audited eval set. This one does."
- **(2) The week-over-week eval results page.** "You can see brand-voice score moving from 76% to 94% across 6 weeks."
- **(3) The exec summary.** "Velocity hit 5.2x with zero hallucinated stats shipped."

*"Three minutes in, the hiring manager said: 'I've seen 14 portfolios in the last month. This is the only one with an eval harness.' That moment is when the offer was really decided." — Maya R.*

## What recruiters / hiring managers actually look at

- **Does the candidate have an artifact at all?** 70% don't.
- **Is it audited?** 90% of artifacts have no eval set. Maya's did.
- **Is it real?** Did real users use it? Maya's team used hers in 14 articles.
- **Can they walk through it in 3 minutes?** The 90-second video meant she could.

**THE PORTFOLIO PIECE**

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### Build the artifact that wins interviews

Maya's interview turned on her capstone — a 30-prompt library with refusal-correctness and grounding evals. You'll build yours inside CPE.

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SALARY · BEFORE & AFTER

# Maya's salary breakdown - before vs after

What Maya was earning on Day 0, what she's earning on Day 90, and where her band sits on the Glassdoor May 2026 USA scale.

Component	Day 0 - Senior Content Marketer	Day 90 - AI Content Strategist	Change
Base salary	USD 98,000	USD 142,000	<b>+USD 44,000 (+45%)</b>
Signing bonus	—	USD 6,000	+USD 6,000
Bonus target	5% (paid 80%)	10% target	+5 pts
Equity (RSU)	None	Small grant	New
Health (family)	30% premium	Employer-paid	~USD 9,000 / yr
401(k) match	3%	4%	+1 pt
PTO	18 days	22 days	+4 days
Work mode	Hybrid	Remote-first	Better

## Where Maya's offer sits on the 2026 USA scale

Tier	AI Content Strategist band (Glassdoor May 2026)	Maya's position
Entry · 0-2 yrs	USD 75-105k	above
Mid · 3-5 yrs	USD 100-140k	<b>at the top</b>
Senior · 5-8 yrs	USD 130-180k	in the lower half

**How the math worked:** Maya was a 4-year content marketer with no prior AI credential. CPE + the capstone moved her from *off the AI Content Strategist scale* into the top of the mid band — a structural re-rate of her seniority, not just a raise.

NEGOTIATION

# The negotiation, step by step

Below is the moment-by-moment of Maya's negotiation from the verbal offer (Day 88) to the signed offer (Day 90).

Day	What happened	What Maya said / did
88 · Mon AM	Verbal offer · USD 138K · USD 5K signing.	"Thank you so much. I'm thrilled. I'd love some time to look at the full package."
88 · Mon PM	Maya called her mentor; mentor confirmed band-high target.	Decided to counter at \$145K + \$7K signing.
89 · Tue AM	Maya emailed the recruiter the counter.	Used the script on page 13 · referenced competing offer + Glassdoor band-high.
89 · Tue PM	Recruiter came back with \$142K + \$6K signing + slight RSU bump.	Maya took a 12-hour decision window.
90 · Wed AM	Maya called the hiring manager directly.	"I'd like to accept. One favour: a 21-day start date so I can wrap responsibly."
90 · Wed PM	Signed offer received. Accepted.	Sent her resignation 48 hours later.

### Three negotiation rules Maya learned

- **Never accept on the call.** Take at least 24 hours, even if the offer feels great.
- **Always counter.** The data says counters yield \$5–15K on average in this band.
- **Counter once, gracefully.** Counter-counters rarely improve the result and risk relationship damage.

SYLLABUS

# The 17-module CPE syllabus - part 1 of 2

The full credential reference Maya worked through. Each module mapped to the chapter in her story where she leaned on it most.

#	Module	Maya's chapter
M01	Prompt-engineering foundations	CH 01 (preview) · CH 02
M02	LLM capabilities & limits	CH 02
M03	Zero-shot, few-shot & CoT patterns	CH 02
M04	System prompts & persona design	CH 02
M05	Prompt template libraries & versioning	CH 02 · CH 03
M06	Structured outputs & JSON schemas	CH 03
M07	Function calling & tool use	CH 03 (light)
M08	RAG · retrieval & embeddings	CH 03
M09	Eval design · gold sets & rubrics	CH 03 · CH 04

**The pattern:** Maya's chapters 2-3 used the bulk of the syllabus. Chapters 4-5 (interviews + offer) drew on the modules indirectly — through what she'd built and could talk about, not new content.

**SYLLABUS**

# The 17-module CPE syllabus - part 2 of 2

#	Module	Maya's chapter
M10	LLM-as-judge & automated evals	CH 03
M11	Hallucination, grounding & truthfulness	CH 03 · CH 04
M12	Safety, abuse & injection defence	CH 04 (the interview save)
M13	Conversational AI design patterns	CH 03 (light)
M14	AI content strategy & QA	CH 03 · CH 05
M15	Automation workflows (Zapier · Make · n8n)	CH 05 (post-offer)
M16	Cost, latency & production ops	CH 03
M17	Capstone, exam prep & viva	CH 03 (capstone shipped)

### Modules Maya pointed to in interviews

- **M09 · Eval design** — her capstone's eval set was the single biggest interview-winning moment.
- **M11 · Hallucination & grounding** — she could name three grounding strategies on demand.
- **M12 · Safety / injection defence** — saved her in the Day-78 technical interview.
- **M14 · AI content strategy** — the bridge between her content-marketing background and the new role.

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**CERTIFICATE**

# Sample certificate

Below is a stylised preview of the digital certificate issued on completion. The live certificate is dated, individually numbered, and accompanied by a verifiable digital badge you can share on LinkedIn, your CV and email signature — exactly the badge Maya shared at the end of her 90 days.



**Verification:** every certificate is independently verifiable at [gsdcouncil.org/verify](https://gsdcouncil.org/verify) using the credential ID printed on the certificate.

FACULTY MAYA LEARNED FROM

# The 10-advisor lineup

The CPE credential is built and taught by a 10-advisor faculty drawn from frontier-AI firms, big tech, Fortune-500 prompt-ops teams, and top-tier consulting. The lineup below describes the roles — names confidential per faculty agreements.

#	Advisor profile	Background
1	Frontier-AI Prompt Lead	Ex-prompt design lead at a frontier-AI lab; 7+ years prompt-craft.
2	Big-Tech AI PM	Senior PM at one of the FAANG firms; ships consumer-AI features.
3	Fortune-500 Prompt Ops Lead	Runs the prompt-portfolio governance team at a Fortune-100 firm.
4	Top-Tier Consulting Partner	AI Practice partner at a tier-1 strategy firm.
5	Bank · AI Risk Director	Owns AI / prompt safety & compliance at a major US bank.
6	SaaS · AI Product Lead	Leads the AI roadmap at a mid-cap SaaS firm.
7	Academic · Prompt Researcher	Publishes in EMNLP / ACL / ICLR; runs an applied prompt lab.
8	Conversational AI Designer · 12 yrs	Built voice + chat for global retail brands; designs Maya's chapter 4 frameworks.
9	Eval Specialist · 8 yrs	Ex-trust-and-safety lead at a frontier-AI firm; designed CPE's eval modules.
10	Career Coach · 400+ AI placements	Owns interview-prep curriculum & Maya's interview practice arc.

**Maya's mentor:** Advisor #3 (Fortune-500 Prompt Ops Lead). They had two structured calls per cohort week plus async feedback on every artifact.

PITFALLS

# Common pitfalls Maya avoided

Eight pitfalls Maya could have fallen into. She didn't, because the cohort + the advisors + the playbook drilled them in advance.

Pitfall Maya avoided	How she avoided it
Picking a toy capstone	Picked a capstone her current employer would actually use.
Skipping evals	Built the 60-scenario gold set on Day 35 — before the capstone.
Applying broadly	Picked 8 firms, tailored every cover note, linked her portfolio.
Hiding her search from her manager	Was transparent at Day 15 — manager became a reference.
Accepting the first offer on the call	Always took 24 hours; always countered (page 18).
No interview practice	Did 12+ mock interviews with peer cohort and Advisor #10.
No safety vocabulary	Memorized prompt-injection layers; saved her in the Day-78 round.
Letting the credential alone do it	Credential <i>plus</i> capstone <i>plus</i> practice — never one alone.

READER PLAYBOOK

# What this means for you - 4 levers

Maya's path isn't a guarantee — but the four levers below are the structural moves any reader can replicate inside CPE. Each maps to a chapter in her story.

Lever	Why it matters	Where it shows up in Maya's story
1 · Pick a real-user capstone	Real users beat toy projects · gives you the artifact and the story.	Chapters 3 + 4 (capstone + interviews).
2 · Build evals before content	Eval discipline is what separates strong candidates from average ones.	Chapter 3 (60-scenario gold set built first).
3 · Target narrow, tailor deeply	8 tailored applications beat 80 generic ones every time.	Chapter 4 (8 firms, 4 advanced, 2 offers).
4 · Negotiate · always	The single-number difference between \$138K and \$142K compounds for years.	Chapter 5 (counter-script + 24-hour wait).

LEARN FROM 10 ADVISORS

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## The credential built by 10 working practitioners

Frontier-AI engineers · Big-tech PMs · Fortune-500 prompt ops leads · top-tier consultants. The faculty Maya learned from.

[Meet the Advisors →](#)

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FAQ

# Frequently asked questions

Question	Short answer
Is Maya a real person?	Maya R. is a composite of real CPE candidates anonymized for privacy. The 90-day arc, salary movement, capstone shape and interview patterns are taken from real cases.
Could anyone replicate her path?	The path is structurally replicable. Outcomes vary with starting role, location, employer mix, and how disciplined the reader's capstone is.
Do I need to code to do this credential?	No — Maya didn't. CPE has a non-coder content / strategy track.
How much time per week did Maya spend?	5–7 focused hours per week. She kept her full-time role throughout.
What was Maya's biggest single advantage?	Her capstone — built around a real user team, with evals on Day 35. Most candidates don't ship one.
Could the salary jump be smaller for me?	Yes — Maya's was 45%. Reported uplifts across CPE candidates range 25-60%. The bands on page 17 are the directional anchor.
What if I'm in an even earlier-career role?	Same playbook, different starting band. CPE works for both upskillers and beginners.
What about agentic AI / generative AI roles?	See AAIPC (agentic) and CGAIP (general). CPE is the prompt-engineering specialism.
What if I fail the exam?	Retakes allowed per the GSDC retake policy. Two sample exams + mock viva included.
What if the program isn't a fit?	GSDC offers a 7-day money-back guarantee per its refund policy.

## YOUR 90 DAYS

# Build your own 90 days - printable plan

Print this page. Adapt Maya's milestones to your own situation. Tick the boxes as you hit each one.

## Phase 1 - Days 1-15 - the wake-up call

- I have identified the role I'm targeting from the 9-role CPE taxonomy.
- I have a study slot blocked weekly · 5-7 focused hours.
- I have told my manager (or made the call not to · with rationale).
- I have a daily 5-prompt warm-up habit started.

## Phase 2 - Days 16-45 - foundations

- CPE enrollment confirmed.
- Module 1 + Module 2 complete.
- First 5-template prompt library shipped.
- First 20-scenario gold set built.

## Phase 3 - Days 46-70 - the capstone

- Capstone scope brief written (problem · users · metrics · risks · controls).
- 30-prompt library shipped.
- 60-scenario gold set built.
- Refusal-correctness + grounding evals running.
- 90-second video walkthrough recorded.

## Phase 4 - Days 71-85 - the interviews

- 8 target firms identified · tailored cover notes drafted.
- 12+ mock interviews completed (STAR + PASS drills).
- Safety vocabulary (injection · grounding · escalation) practiced out loud.
- Capstone link live in LinkedIn featured section.

## Phase 5 - Days 86-90 - the offer

- Counter-script practiced (page 13).
- Glassdoor band-high target written down.
- 24-hour decision rule pre-committed to.
- Day-one playbook drafted for the new role.

**GETTING STARTED**

# How to start this week

Five moves to take this week — even before you enroll — that line up your own 90-day arc.

Move	What you do	Time
1 · Pick your target role	Match your background to one of the 9 roles in the sister hiring report.	20 min
2 · Pick your capstone scope	Pick a project your current (or last) employer would actually use.	20 min
3 · Block your weekly slot	5-7 hours per week for the next 12-13 weeks.	5 min
4 · Update LinkedIn headline	Add "CPE candidate · [target role]" to your headline.	10 min
5 · Tell one person	Manager, mentor, partner, friend. Public commitment compounds.	30 min

**By the time you start Module 1**, you already know your role, your capstone shape and your weekly anchor. The program accelerates everything else.

**NEXT COHORT INTAKE**

**[50% OFF]**

## Join the next CPE cohort intake

Daily live sessions, peer cohort, capstone shipped end-to-end. Move from story reader to enrolled candidate in under two minutes.

[Join the Next Cohort →](#)

*Tap anywhere on this card →*

**ENROLLMENT**

# Walk your own 90 days

You've read Maya's 5 chapters, her capstone, her negotiation, her advisors and her syllabus. The next step is starting Module 1. Access opens immediately; your cohort is assigned within 24 hours.

Step	What happens
1 · Click any CTA in this story	You land on the official CPE / Prompt Engineer Story program page.
2 · Apply your offer at checkout	Your 50% discount is auto-applied within the offer window.
3 · Complete enrolment	Your access details, cohort schedule and mentor introduction arrive in your inbox.
4 · Start Module 1	Open the GSDC Live Studio and begin Chapter 1 of your own story.

### Direct contact

**Program page:** [gsdcouncil.org/certification-program/prompt-engineer-story](https://gsdcouncil.org/certification-program/prompt-engineer-story)

**Issuing body:** Global Skill Development Council (GSDC)

**Recognition:** 100+ countries · 250,000+ certified

**Credential code:** CPE · Certified Prompt Engineer

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*Thank you for reading Maya's story. We'll see you inside Module 1 — and 90 days from now, inside your own offer call.*