

Prompt, agent, or workflow: choose the right tool

Give a decision guide for reusable instructions, judgment with tools and context, and repeatable multi-step execution.

Prompts, agents, and workflows all make work reusable, but they solve different problems. Start with the smallest option that gives the work the consistency, context, tools, and control it needs.

Use a saved prompt for reusable instructions

A saved prompt is a repeatable set of instructions that a person applies in a conversation. Use it for recurring requests such as summarizing meeting notes, drafting a status update, or checking a document against a checklist. The user still chooses the context, reviews the result, and directs follow-ups.

Use an agent for a focused AI worker

An agent combines a purpose, durable instructions, an approved model, knowledge, and tools. Use an agent when the same role must make bounded decisions across different requests—for example, a support triage agent that searches approved documentation or an operations analyst that can read a connected system.

Use a workflow for a repeatable process

A workflow defines ordered steps, inputs, outputs, and optional human review. Use one when a process should run the same way, pass data between steps, pause for approval, or produce a trackable run record. A workflow may call agents, but it also controls when and how each step occurs.

Quick decision guide

- The wording should be reusable, but the user will direct the work: saved prompt.
- The work needs a consistent role, approved knowledge, or tools: agent.
- The work needs multiple ordered steps, structured inputs, handoffs, or approvals: workflow.
- The need is still unclear or exploratory: start in Chat, then promote the proven pattern later.

A practical progression

1. Complete the task manually in Chat and note the instructions and checks that matter.

2. Save the instruction as a prompt when repetition is the main problem.
3. Create an agent when durable context, a role, or approved tools improve the result.
4. Build a workflow when the sequence, inputs, outputs, approvals, or audit trail must be repeatable.
5. Test with non-sensitive examples and confirm access before sharing or publishing the reusable asset.

Access still applies

A prompt, agent, or workflow does not grant access by itself. Users can act only through the models, knowledge, integrations, connections, and operations allowed by their organization and the resource's sharing rules.