Tracker

Finding the *right people*

Eva prompt playbook · Part two

Searching is the thing Eva gets asked to do more than everything else put together. It's also where a vague prompt costs you the most.

TEAR-OUT All eighteen prompts are collected on one page at the back, ready to copy.

18 SEARCHES | 6 STAGES | PART TWO

First — searching is a conversation, not a query

You are not going to describe the perfect candidate in one go, and you are not meant to. A search that comes back wrong isn't a failure – it's the first half of the job. The skill worth having is knowing what to change next, and changing only that.

Everything here is built around that loop. Open with as much as you can name, look at what comes back, then adjust one thing at a time. Two or three rounds of that will beat any single perfectly worded attempt.

As always, Eva can already see the record you have open, and she works under the same permissions you do. If you can't see it in Tracker, neither can she.

The five things that actually narrow a search

> [1] Find candidates for this job who live within 30 miles of Chepstow. [2] They must have sold into the construction sector [3] and hold a current CSCS card on their record. [4] Only people available at short notice. [5] Give me ten, with their location, last job title and one line on why each fits.

1
Where
"within 30 miles of Chepstow"

A radius is a filter. "Near", "local" and "commutable" are not – she has to guess what you'd accept.

2
What they've done
"sold into construction"

The sector or setting, not just the job title. It's usually what the client is really buying.

3
Proof
"hold a current CSCS card"

Tickets, licences, qualifications. Say it must be on the record, or she'll infer it from a job title.

4
When
"available at short notice"

Availability, notice period, temp or permanent. Cuts a long list faster than anything else.

5
What comes back
"ten, with location and why"

How many, and which columns. Otherwise you get a paragraph you have to unpick.

You won't always have all five. Name the ones you have and say plainly which are must-haves — the rest she can work around.

WHEN THE LIST COMES BACK WRONG

Change one thing at a time *and say what to keep*

The commonest mistake in a second search isn't asking for the wrong thing – it's rewriting the whole request. Change three criteria at once and you've no idea which one fixed it or which one lost you the good candidate from the first list. Move one, hold the rest, and say so out loud.

Narrow

Add one must-have. "Keep the same list, but only the ones who…"

Broaden

Relax one, protect the rest. "Widen the radius but keep the licence as essential."

Swap

Rule one thing out, name what replaces it. "Not property – corporate specifically."

Whichever you use, finish with "and tell me what changed". Knowing she dropped eleven people, or relaxed the location for three of the new names, is what lets you trust the second list more than the first.

Three things worth asking for every time

The record ID

So you can go straight to the record instead of searching by name – and so you know the person is actually in Tracker.

Last activity

A perfect match nobody has spoken to since 2023 is a different proposition from one who called last week.

What each one misses

The gap against your criteria is what you'll have to sell around. Better to know it before the call than during it.

Three extra words on the end of a search, and the list comes back checkable. Spot-check two names against Tracker before you act on a list you haven't seen before.

The same search, asked three ways

BAD

find me candidates near Chepstow

No distance, no role, no experience, no number. Eva picks all four, and when the list is wrong you have nothing to adjust. This is roughly how most searches start.

OK

Find candidates for this job within 30 miles of Chepstow

A real radius, and the job gives her the role. But nothing about sector, tickets or availability – so the list will be long and half of it unusable.

GOOD

Find candidates for this job who live within 30 miles of Chepstow. They must have sold into the construction sector — treat that as a must-have, not a nice-to-have. Give me ten with their location, last job title and one line on why each one fits.

Distance, sector, a stated must-have, a number and the columns you want. Ten seconds longer to type, and the second search starts from somewhere.

None of these is wrong to send. The difference is that the first one leaves you nothing to work with when the answer disappoints, and the third tells you exactly which dial to turn.

Eighteen searches worth stealing

Grouped by where you are in the hunt — opening a search, cutting a long list down, widening a thin one, checking the names are real, and turning the result into calls. Treat them as a base to build from rather than a guarantee: the same wording lands differently depending on what's in your database. Adjust the criteria to your own patch.

Starting a search	RUNNING A SEARCH	4 SEARCHES
Too many results	RUNNING A SEARCH	3 SEARCHES
Too few results	RUNNING A SEARCH	3 SEARCHES
Checking the list	MAKING IT USEFUL	3 SEARCHES
Candidate first	MAKING IT USEFUL	2 SEARCHES
Turning a list into work	MAKING IT USEFUL	3 SEARCHES

STAGE

Starting a search

Your opening search. The more of the five you name up front, the less Eva has to invent – and the closer the first list lands.

1 Search from an open job

SEARCH

> Find candidates for this job who live within 30 miles of [town]. They must have [essential experience] – treat that as a must-have, not a nice-to-have. Give me ten, with their location, current or last job title, and one line on why each one fits.

3 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It searches on your criteria, shows where each person is, and says why each one fits.

INSTEAD OF find me candidates near Chepstow

A radius is a real filter; "near" is not. Splitting must-haves from nice-to-haves is the other half – without it Eva weights everything equally and you get someone perfect on paper who can't do the one thing the client actually needs.

2 Search the database with no job open

SEARCH

> Search the database for [job title] candidates in [town or region]. They need [skill or qualification]. Show me the best fifteen with their location, last job title, and when we last had any activity with them.

3 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It searches the whole database, shows title and location, and tells you how warm each one is.

INSTEAD OF are there any qualified plumbers in the database?

A yes/no question gets a yes/no answer. Ask for the list, and ask for last activity while you're there – a great candidate nobody has spoken to since 2023 is a different proposition from one who called last week.

3 Search from a spec you've been sent

SEARCH

> Here is the job description below. Find the ten candidates in our database who match it most closely, judged on the must-haves in the spec rather than the nice-to-haves. For each one, say which must-have they miss.
>
> [paste the spec]

3 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It reads the spec, ranks against the must-haves, and names the gap for each person.

INSTEAD OF rate these engineers per the job description

Pasting the spec beats summarising it — she reads the client's own words rather than your shorthand. Asking what each person misses is what makes the list usable: you know before the call what you'll have to sell around.

4 Hard filter on a licence or qualification

SEARCH

> Find [job title] candidates who hold [licence or qualification]. Only include people where that qualification is actually recorded on the record — don't infer it from their job title. For each one, show me what you found it in.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It filters on the qualification and shows you the evidence behind each one.

INSTEAD OF find me trade qualified electricians

Job titles imply qualifications they don't always have. Telling her not to infer, and asking where she found it, is the difference between a list you can submit and a list you have to re-check by hand.

STAGE

Too many results

Cutting a long list down without losing the good ones. Change one thing at a time and say what to keep — that is the whole skill.

5 Add a must-have to the list you have

NARROW

> Keep the same list, but only the ones with [sector] experience. If that leaves fewer than five, tell me — don't widen anything else to make up the numbers.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It filters the list you already have and tells you rather than quietly widening it.

INSTEAD OF only the ones with construction experience please

Left to herself she will quietly relax something else to hand you a full-looking list. The last clause stops that, and a short honest list is far more useful than a padded one.

6 Tighten the area

NARROW

> Same search, but tighten the radius to [X] miles of [place]. Keep every other criterion exactly as it was, and tell me how many people that dropped.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It re-runs on the tighter radius and tells you how many it cost you.

INSTEAD OF closer to the office

"Keep every other criterion as it was" is the load-bearing phrase in every refinement. The count tells you whether you've cut fat or cut the list in half.

7 Rule a background out

NARROW

> Drop anyone whose background is mainly [X] — I'm after [Y] specifically. Keep the rest of the criteria as they are, and tell me who you removed.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It removes the wrong background and keeps the rest of the search intact.

INSTEAD OF dont want property accountants

Saying what you don't want is often faster than describing what you do. Asking who was removed lets you catch it when she's read your exclusion too broadly.

STAGE

Too few results

Widening a thin search without drifting into people you would never actually call.

8 Broaden, but protect the one thing that matters

BROADEN

> Too few. Broaden this search, but keep [the one non-negotiable] as a hard requirement — widen on location and seniority instead. For each new name, tell me which criterion you relaxed to include them.

3 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It widens the search, holds your hard requirement, and says what it relaxed for each new name.

INSTEAD OF broaden the search

"Broaden" on its own relaxes whatever she feels like, usually the thing you cared about most. Naming what must survive, and asking what she traded for each new name, turns a vague widening into something you can audit in ten seconds.

9 Include the titles that mean the same thing

BROADEN

> Include adjacent job titles as well — anything that means the same job in practice, at the same level. List the titles you've included so I can see you haven't drifted into something more junior.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It searches adjacent titles and lists which ones it used.

INSTEAD OF look for similar job titles too

Half your database is filed under a title nobody in your patch uses. Asking her to show the titles she searched is how you catch the drift before you ring someone three grades too junior.

10 Go back further

BROADEN

> Widen this to include people we haven't spoken to in a long time, as well as recent ones. Mark clearly which are which, so I can see who needs a warm-up call before anything else.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It reaches back into older records and flags how stale each one is.

INSTEAD OF any older candidates?

The best match in the database is often someone placed four years ago and never touched since. Worth surfacing — as long as you know to treat that call differently.

STAGE

Checking the list

Before you pick up the phone, make sure the names in front of you are real and worth calling.

11 Make the list checkable

VERIFY

> For each candidate on this list, give me their record ID and the date of their last activity, so I can open them in Tracker and check.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It gives you the ID and last activity for every name so you can look each one up.

INSTEAD OF show me the candidates again

The most useful two columns on any list Eva gives you. The ID means you can verify the person exists and is who she says; the date tells you how cold the call will be. Ask for them every time.

12 Who is actually available

VERIFY

> Of these candidates, who looks immediately available or between roles? Say what you're basing that on for each one — the record, a note, or an assumption.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It picks out the available ones and shows what it judged that on.

INSTEAD OF who is available?

Availability is rarely a clean field, so she is inferring it. Making her say what from means you can tell a logged conversation from a guess before you promise the client a start date.

13 When did we last speak to them

VERIFY

> For each person on this list, when did we last have contact, what was it, and who from our side made it? Put the longest ago first.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It dates the last contact for each and shows who spoke to them.

INSTEAD OF when was the last contact made

Knowing a colleague spoke to someone last week changes the call entirely – and stops two of you ringing the same person on the same day.

STAGE

Candidate first

Starting from a person rather than a job – the search you run when someone good comes free.

14 Match one candidate to every open job

MATCH

> Match this candidate against every open job we have, using their CV and their activity notes rather than just their job title. Exclude [job already submitted to]. Rank the jobs by how well they fit and say what's missing for each.

3 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It reads the CV and the notes, ranks every open job, and names the gap in each.

INSTEAD OF what else could this candidate do?

Activity notes hold what the CV doesn't – what they said they wanted, what they'd never do again. Telling her to read those as well as the CV is what separates a real match from a keyword one.

15 A profile to send speculatively

PRODUCE

> Write a speculative profile for this candidate I can send to clients — strengths, sector experience, what they're looking for and availability. No name, no current employer, nothing that identifies them. Under 150 words.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It writes the anonymised profile and keeps identifying details out of it.

INSTEAD OF summarise this candidate to send to clients

Spec profiles go out before anyone has agreed anything, so the anonymising is the point. Say it explicitly, because she will otherwise lead with the name and the employer.

STAGE

Turning a list into work

The list is only worth having if it turns into calls. These take you from names on a screen to something you can work through.

16 Build a call sheet

PRODUCE

> Turn this list into a call sheet as a table: name, phone, town, current job title, what we know about their availability, and one question worth opening with for each. Keep it to one row per person.

3 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It builds the table, adds the availability note, and gives you an opening question each.

INSTEAD OF can you give me their numbers

A table you can work down beats a paragraph you have to re-read. The opening question is the part that saves you thinking on the first three calls.

17 Prescreening questions for a job

PRODUCE

> Write eight prescreening questions for this job. Cover the must-haves from the spec, availability and notice period, and expected salary. Keep each one short enough to ask on a first phone call.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It writes the questions and covers the commercial ground people forget.

INSTEAD OF create prescreening questions for this job

Without being told, she writes competency questions and skips money and notice — the two things that actually kill a placement later. Name them and they get asked on call one.

18 Add the shortlist to the job

UPDATE

> Add the top ten from this list to the longlist on this job. When you're done, tell me how many you added and name them, so I can check the job record.

2 JOBS IN ONE PROMPT It adds them to the longlist and reports back exactly who went on.

INSTEAD OF add these to the longlist

Eva can change records, but her account of what she did isn't always right — sometimes the change lands and the reply says it didn't. Ask for the names back and then look at the job before you act on it.

TEAR-OUT

Every search, on one page

All eighteen prompts from the preceding pages, ready to copy.

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Add the top ten from this list to the longlist on this job. When you're done, tell me how many you added and name them, so I can check the job record.