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The SOP Assistant Kit

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The SOP template, the voice-note-to-SOP prompt, and the exact instructions for an assistant that answers your team from your SOPs — and says so when it can't.

The idea

Every "Boss, how do we..." is an SOP that exists only in your head. Each time you answer, the knowledge disappears the moment you walk away.

Don't write a manual. Write down the **ten questions that interrupt you most**, load them into an AI project your team can use, and let every new question become the next SOP.

Step 1 — Find your ten

For one week, every time someone asks you how to do something, write the question down. One line. Don't answer differently — just log it.

By Friday you'll have 20–40 questions. Group the duplicates. The ten most frequent are your first ten SOPs.

Common ones for marketplace sellers: returns and refunds, a buyer asking for a discount, late or lost parcels, wrong item sent, packing fragile items, stock running low, bad review response, voucher setup, when to escalate to you.

Step 2 — Record, don't write

For each question, record yourself answering it — a voice note, 1–3 minutes. Talk as if the staff member is in front of you. Include the exceptions ("unless it's...").

Transcribe with any speech-to-text tool (your phone's built-in one is fine).

Step 3 — The voice-note-to-SOP prompt

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Here's a transcript of me explaining how my team should handle:
[the question]

Turn it into an SOP using this exact template:

TITLE:
SECTION NUMBER: [I'll fill this]
OWNER: [I'll fill this]
LAST CHECKED: [I'll fill this]
WHEN THIS APPLIES: (one sentence)
STEPS: (numbered, one action each, verb first)
EXCEPTIONS: (each "unless..." I mentioned, as its own line)
ESCALATE TO [NAME] IF: (the cases where staff must not decide alone)
EXAMPLE: (one short real-sounding case)

Rules:
- Use only what I said. Don't add steps, policies or timeframes I didn't
  mention.
- If something I said is unclear or contradicts itself, put it under
  QUESTIONS FOR [NAME] at the end instead of guessing.
- Plain language. A new hire should follow it on day one.

Transcript:
[paste]
```

Read every SOP before it goes in. The "QUESTIONS FOR" section is where you'll find the policies you thought were clear but aren't.

The SOP template

```
TITLE: Opened items — return request
SECTION: 4.2
OWNER: [name]
LAST CHECKED: [date]

WHEN THIS APPLIES:
A buyer asks to return an item they've already opened or used.

STEPS:
1. Ask for photos of the item and packaging.
2. Check the photos against the fault the buyer described.
3. If faulty: accept the return and reply with the return instructions.
4. After the item arrives, inspect it before approving the refund.
5. Log the order ID and outcome in the returns sheet.

EXCEPTIONS:
- Not faulty, only changed mind: follow section 4.3.

ESCALATE TO [NAME] IF:
- The buyer threatens a bad review or dispute.
- The order value is above RM[amount].

EXAMPLE:
Buyer says the zip broke after two days. Photos show the zip pull detached.
Accept, send instructions, inspect on arrival, refund.
```

This is an example structure — the policy in it is illustrative. Your SOP says whatever your policy actually is, and must match the platform's own return rules.

Every SOP needs an owner and a last-checked date. An outdated SOP is worse than none: the assistant will confidently tell staff the old rule, with a section number.

Step 4 — Set up the assistant

Use any AI tool that supports a project or custom assistant with uploaded files and can be shared with your team (for example a Claude Project, a custom GPT, or a Gemini Gem). Upload the SOPs as documents, one per SOP or one combined file.

Paste these as the assistant's instructions:

```
You answer questions from [shop name] staff using only the SOP documents
provided.

How to answer:
- Answer in short numbered steps, the way the SOP says.
- Always end with the SOP section you used, e.g. "(SOP 4.2)".
- If the SOP lists an exception or escalation that fits, say so first.

When the SOPs don't cover it:
- Say exactly: "This isn't in the SOPs — ask [name]."
- Do not guess, do not give general advice, do not describe what
  "most shops" do.

Never:
- Invent a policy, timeframe, amount or promise to a buyer.
- Answer questions about refunds, compensation or discounts beyond what
  an SOP states.
- Draft a message to a buyer that promises something the SOP doesn't.

Staff may write in English, Malay, or a mix. Reply in the language
they used.
```

Without the "not in the SOPs" line, it will invent a plausible policy. With it, the gaps show up as questions — which tells you exactly which SOP to write next.

Before sharing, test it with 5 questions you know are covered and 5 you know aren't. All 5 uncovered ones must get "This isn't in the SOPs."

How it grows

1. Staff ask the assistant.
2. It answers from the SOPs — or says "not in the SOPs".
3. You answer that one once. Record it.
4. Run the prompt, add the new SOP.

Once a month: check the "last checked" dates. Anything over three months old, or touched by a policy change, gets re-read by its owner.

The assistant's gaps are your documentation to-do list.

Questions? Email hello@jjwong.ai — I read them all. More at @jjwong.ai — one AI play for SEA sellers, daily.