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The Context File

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JJ Wong · jjwong.ai

One page you write once and paste at the start of every AI session — or save as project instructions — so you stop re-explaining your business every time. Two versions: the fill-in-the-blanks one, and one set up for agency work across several clients.

Where it goes

- **Pasted at the top of a new chat.** Works everywhere, always.
- **As project instructions.** Most AI tools now have projects or custom instructions that load automatically. Paste it there once and it's in every conversation inside that project.

Either way, it's a text file you own. Keep the master copy somewhere you control, not only inside one tool — you'll want it again when you switch.

Version 1 — Fill in the blanks

CONTEXT FILE — last updated [date]

BUSINESS

[What you do, in two plain sentences. What you sell, where, to whom.]

CUSTOMER

Who buys: [e.g. working adults in Klang Valley buying for their own use, mostly on mobile, price-aware but not bargain hunters]

Who doesn't: [the customer you're NOT for — this matters as much as who you are for]

HARD CONSTRAINTS

- Channels: [Shopee / Lazada / TikTok Shop / own site]
- Team: [e.g. me plus one part-time packer]
- Budget for tools: [amount per month]
- Margin floor: [the lowest net margin you'll accept, e.g. 20%]
- Already ruled out: [things you've decided not to do, and why]

HOW WE TALK ABOUT THINGS

[Your internal words. e.g. "Hero SKUs" = our top 10 by revenue.

"Campaign" = a platform mega-sale, not our own promo.

"Landed cost" = supplier price plus freight, duty and packaging.]

HOW I WANT ANSWERS

- Length: [short / detailed]
- Format: [bullet points / prose / tables when comparing]
- Tone: [direct; tell me if I'm wrong]
- Currency: RM. Spelling: British/Malaysian.

When something in this file conflicts with what you'd normally recommend, say so instead of quietly working around it.

Block five changes the output more than any other, and it's the one people skip. The model doesn't know you want it short and blunt until you say so.

The last line is doing real work. Without it, a model given a constraint it disagrees with will often just ignore it politely — recommending a tool over your budget, or a tactic you've ruled out, without mentioning the conflict.

Version 2 — For agency or multi-client work

If you manage several brands, one context file per client, all following the same skeleton, plus one short file about how *you* work that sits above them all.

HOW WE WORK — [agency name] — last updated [date]

We run marketplace operations for brand clients: listings, campaigns, chat, stock and reporting across Shopee, Lazada and TikTok Shop.

Rules that apply to every client:

- Nothing goes live on a client's store without a named person approving it.
- Never state a spec, warranty or claim that isn't in the client's own product data.
- Client data never leaves the client's context — never mix examples between clients.
- When unsure whether something is allowed on a platform, say so and flag it for checking. Do not guess platform rules.

Answer style: short, direct, RM, British/Malaysian spelling.

Flag risk before opportunity.

CLIENT — [brand] — last updated [date]

What they sell: [category, price range, hero SKUs]

Channels and store names: [...]

Their customer: [...]

Brand voice rules: [words they use, words they never use, formality]

Approval: [who signs off what, and how fast they usually reply]

Margin floor / discount ceiling: [...]

Things this client has said no to: [...]

Campaign calendar notes: [which mega-sales they join, which they skip]

Sensitive: [anything never to mention publicly]

Load "How we work" plus the one client file you're working on. Never two client files in the same session.

Keeping it alive

If you explained something twice, it belongs in the file. That's the whole maintenance rule. Every time you catch yourself retyping context, add the line.

Date it and reread it monthly. Prices change, you drop a channel, a constraint stops applying. A stale context file is worse than none — the model reasons confidently from out-of-date facts written in your own words, so you don't notice.

Pruning matters more than adding. A one-page file that's current beats a five-page file that's half wrong.

What never goes in it

- Passwords, API keys, tokens, bank details
- Customer names, phone numbers, addresses, order data
- Anything a client told you in confidence
- Anything under NDA

The file gets pasted into a lot of places. Write it assuming it will be seen.

The one thing to remember

An hour writing this improves every AI conversation you have from now on. Most people spend that same hour looking for a better prompt instead.

Questions? Reply to this email — I read them all. More at @jjwong.ai — one AI play for SEA sellers, daily.