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AI ESSENTIALS · GUIDE NO. 10

TURN CLAUDE INTO AN OPERATING SYSTEM

The 5 connectors that turn Claude from a chatbot into the layer your whole workday runs through — plus the chained workflows that make it feel like a team member.

~8 MIN READ · FOR EVERYONE WHO COMMENTED "SYSTEM" · SETUP FOR YOUR FIRST CONNECTOR: ~60 SECONDS

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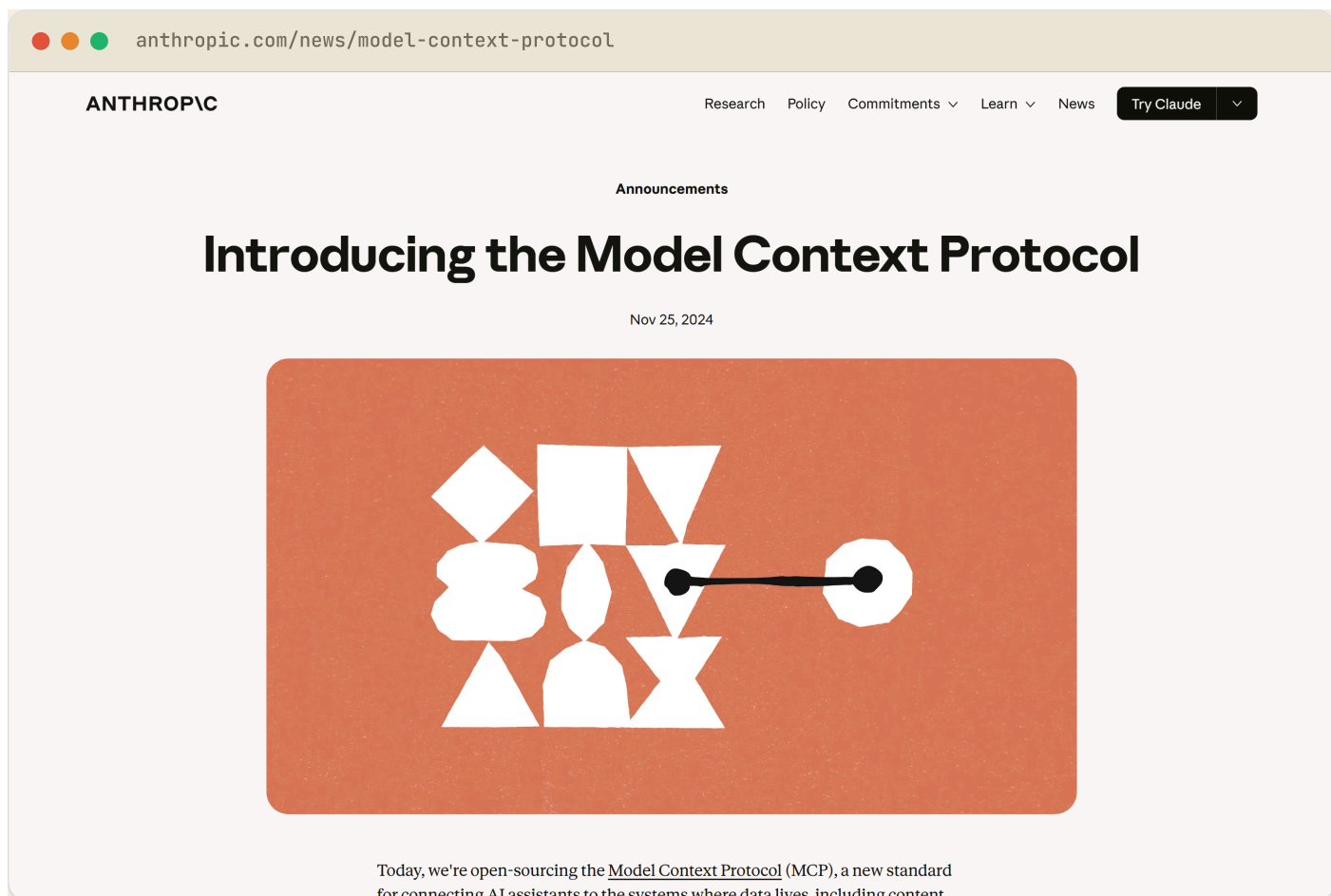
THE SHORT VERSION

- Most people use Claude like a chatbot — that's ~10% of what it does.
- Connect it to your tools via **MCP** and it becomes the layer your work runs through: calendar, files, email, tasks, customers.
- The 5 to start: **Calendar, Docs, Gmail, a project tool, and your CRM.**
- The magic isn't one connector — it's **chaining** several in sequence. Start with 3, grow to 6.

THE REFRAME

Most people use Claude like a chatbot: ask a question, get an answer, copy it somewhere else. That's maybe 10% of what it can do. An operating system is different — it's the layer everything else runs on top of. It knows your schedule, holds your files, sends your messages, tracks your work, and remembers your people. Connect Claude to the right tools and it becomes exactly that.

The bridge that makes this possible is **MCP** — the Model Context Protocol, an open standard Anthropic released so any app can "speak Claude." You don't need to understand the plumbing; you just turn connectors on. Here's Anthropic introducing it:



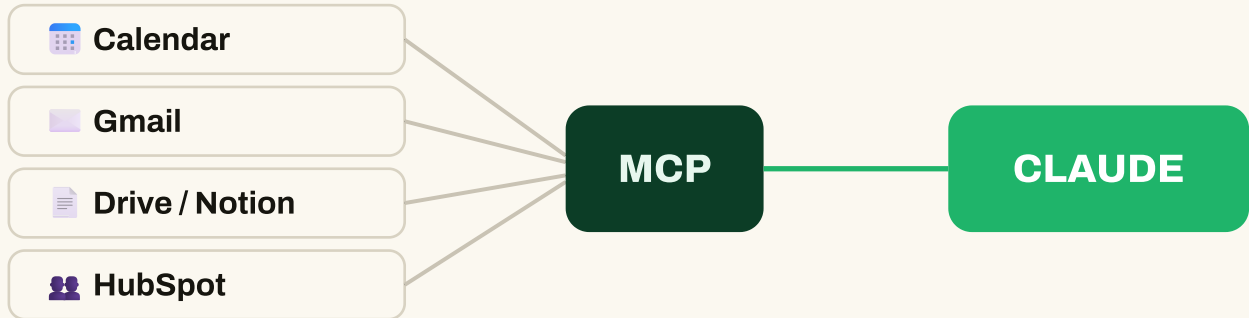
MCP is the open standard that lets your tools plug into Claude — the thing every connector is built on. — **Source:** [Anthropic — "Introducing the Model Context Protocol"](#)

One connector is a feature. Several, chained together, is the moment Claude stops feeling like a chatbot and starts feeling like staff.

WHAT MCP IS, IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Think of MCP as a universal adapter. Before it, every app spoke its own language and Claude couldn't reach any of them. MCP is the single standard in the middle: your calendar, inbox, files, and CRM all plug into it, and Claude reads them through one consistent connection. That's why you can add a new tool in a minute instead of wiring up an integration.

MCP — THE UNIVERSAL ADAPTER



One open standard lets any app "speak Claude." You just turn connectors on.

Your tools plug into one open standard; Claude reads them all through it.

THE 5 THAT FORM THE OPERATING SYSTEM

Think of these as the core services of your OS — each covers a job an operating system has to do.



Calendar — the clock

Knows your real schedule



Docs — the hard drive

Answers pulled from your files, not guesses



Gmail — the network

Reads the real thread, replies in your voice



Project tool — the task manager

Sees what is assigned and overdue



CRM — the memory

A full customer history before you send

Five services, five jobs. Pick the version of Docs and CRM that matches the tools you already use.

1 • Calendar — the clock

Claude becomes a chief of staff that knows your real schedule, so planning and prep stop being manual.

```
"Look at my next 7 days. Tell me what to prep for, and block 90 minutes of focus time where it fits."
```

2 · Docs (Drive or Notion) — the hard drive

Answers come from your real files instead of guesses.

```
"Using only my [proposal doc], write a one-paragraph summary I can paste into an email."
```

3 · Gmail — the network

Email is most people's biggest time sink. Claude reads the real thread and replies in your voice.

```
"Draft a reply to my most recent unread email in my voice. Under 120 words, end with a clear next step."
```

4 · Project tool (Asana / Linear) — the task manager

Claude sees what's assigned and overdue, and can create tasks from a conversation — without you re-explaining your workload.

```
"What's overdue across my projects, and what should I personally tackle first today?"
```

5 · CRM (HubSpot) — the memory

The one almost nobody turns on — and the biggest unlock. Claude pulls a customer's entire history before you ever hit send.

```
"Give me the full history on [contact] and draft a follow-up that moves the deal forward."
```

TURN ONE ON (60 SECONDS)

TURN ONE ON — ABOUT 60 SECONDS

Connectors



Three steps, about a minute. You can disconnect or re-scope anything anytime.

1. Open Claude → **Settings** → **Connectors**.
2. **Browse connectors**, find your tool, click **Connect**.
3. Sign in and **approve the permissions** — read this screen; it's where you decide what Claude can see.
4. Done. Ask normally, or say "use my Gmail" to be explicit.

THE PART THAT MAKES IT AN OS: CHAINING

One connector is a feature. The operating system shows up when Claude uses **several in sequence** without you stitching them together.

CHAINING — WHERE IT BECOMES AN OS



"Read my calendar and unread email, then tell me what's on today and what needs a reply."

The morning boot-up: two connectors, one instruction, a finished brief.

- **Morning boot-up** — "Read my calendar and unread Gmail, then give me a one-screen brief: what's on today, what needs a reply, what to prep." (*Calendar + Gmail*)
- **Deal prep** — "Pull [contact]'s history from HubSpot and our last emails, then draft a follow-up." (*CRM + Gmail*)
- **Client update** — "Check this project in Asana and our Slack thread, then write the client a clear status update." (*Project + Slack*)
- **End-of-day shutdown** — "Look at what I closed in my project tool today and log it, then tell me the 3 things to start with tomorrow." (*Project + Calendar*)

TWO RULES SO IT DOESN'T BACKFIRE

DON'T OVER-INSTALL

Every connector is another tool Claude has to choose between — too many makes it slower and less precise. **Start with 3, grow to 6.** More is not better.

MIND PERMISSIONS

Give Claude what it needs and nothing more. That approval screen is the control panel — re-scope or disconnect anytime.

THE TOP 20 CONNECTORS TO KNOW

Those 5 are the operating-system core. Beyond them there are **400+ connectors and counting** — here are the 20 most useful, all live and connectable today, by category. Turn on the ones that match where your work already happens.

CONNECTOR	CATEGORY	WHAT CLAUDE DOES WITH IT
Google Drive	Files	Search, read, and pull any document into a workflow
Gmail	Email	Search the inbox, draft replies, summarize threads
Google Calendar	Calendar	Check availability, create events, prep for meetings
Microsoft Outlook	Email + calendar	Email and scheduling for Microsoft-first teams
Notion	Docs / wiki	Search the workspace, create and update pages
Slack	Team chat	Read channels, surface decisions, draft messages
Dropbox	Files	Search and pull files from cloud storage
Asana	Projects	Create and update tasks, surface what is overdue
Linear	Dev / issues	Create issues, update status, query the backlog
ClickUp	Projects	Reach tasks, docs, and project data in-chat

CONNECTOR	CATEGORY	WHAT CLAUDE DOES WITH IT
Atlassian (Jira + Confluence)	Dev / docs	Track issues and pull team documentation
GitHub	Code	Work with repos, pull requests, and issues
HubSpot	CRM	Pull contacts, deal stages, and engagement data
Salesforce	CRM	Query and update records, surface campaign data
Stripe	Payments	Look up revenue, customers, and invoices
PayPal	Payments	Check transactions and payouts
Canva	Design	Generate and edit designs inside Claude
Figma	Design	Create diagrams and wireframes in the chat
Airtable	Data	Query and update your bases
Zapier	Automation	Reach 8,000+ other apps for custom automation

HOW TO PICK

Don't add all 20. Turn on the 3–4 that cover where your work actually lives — usually your calendar, your docs, your inbox, and your CRM. Add more only when you feel a real gap.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Turn on **one** connector right now — make it your calendar. Run its starter prompt. Add a second tomorrow. You'll feel the difference within a day.

SOURCES & WHERE TO LEARN MORE

- [Anthropic — Introducing the Model Context Protocol](#)
- [Claude — Connect your tools \(Connectors help\)](#)
- [Want the skills playbook? Comment "SKILLS" for that guide](#)

Built by Hank Barker // AI Essentials // @hankhelpsai. Connector directory changes often — last reviewed July 2026.