

Consul Starter: Your AI Chief of Staff, A to Z

Download the bot at **consuldigital.ai** (free). Unzip it into a folder named `cos_bot` in your home folder. Install **Node.js** (nodejs.org, LTS). Two ways to set it up: do it by hand below, or, if you run an AI coding tool (Claude Code, Codex, Kimi), open `SET_UP_WITH_YOUR_AI.md` in the folder and paste its prompt; it installs, fills your keys, and starts the bot while you just supply the tokens.

1. Telegram bot (2 min)

In Telegram, open **@BotFather**. Send `/newbot`, name it, get your **token** (`1234567890:AAH...`). Then send `/setprivacy`, pick your bot, choose **Disable**.

2. Your group (2 min)

Create a new Telegram group with just you and your bot. Turn on **Topics** in group settings and add: **Scheduler, Reminders, To-dos**. Make the bot an admin. It replies in whichever topic you use, so the assistant stays organized by function.

3. Setup + save your keys (2 min)

Double-click `1_setup.command` in `cos_bot` (right-click, Open, if macOS objects). It installs everything and creates your `.env` file. Open `.env` in TextEdit, paste your BotFather token on `TELEGRAM_BOT_TOKEN=`, set your timezone on `TZ=` (e.g. `America/Chicago`).

4. The brain: MixRoute key (3 min)

Create an account at **mixroute.ai**, make an **API key**, paste it on `MIXROUTE_API_KEY=` in `.env`. One key, 200-plus models, swap brains without touching code. Set the model on `CLAUDE_MODEL=: claude-haiku-4-5` runs on the free tier (to-dos, reminders, quick answers); add credits and switch to `claude-sonnet-4-6` as your daily driver (scheduling and real reasoning); use `claude-opus-4-8` for heavy planning. *Disclosure: my MixRoute link is an affiliate link; I earn a commission at no cost to you. Any OpenAI-compatible provider also works.*

5. Google Calendar (10 min, the only fiddly part)

At **console.cloud.google.com**: new project → **Library** → enable **Google Calendar API** → **OAuth consent screen**, fill it in, then **Publish App** so it says **In production** (skip this and your connection dies every 7 days; this is the step everyone misses) → **Credentials** → **OAuth client ID**, type **Desktop app** → **Download JSON**. Rename the file `google_credentials.json`, drop it in the `data` folder inside `cos_bot`, then double-click `2_link-google.command` and approve in the browser. Once, permanent.

6. Start it

Double-click `3_start.command`. In your group, type: "Remind me to call the dentist tomorrow at 9, and put lunch with Sam on the calendar Friday at noon." Watch the reminder file and the event land on your real calendar. The window prints your Telegram user id on your first message; paste it on `ALLOWED_USER_ID=` in `.env` and restart so the bot answers only you. Then double-click `4_install-alwayson.command` and it runs forever in the background.

Day one: to-dos, timed reminders, calendar create/read/cancel, photo reading. **Make it yours:** edit `memory/client_context.md` so it knows who you are. **Voice, morning briefings, inbox triage, custom tools, running this for clients:** that is the full build and the course. **consuldigital.ai**