

Side Business Launchpad — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a ninety-day launch you can actually run on nights and weekends. Each section maps to one course module and ends with concrete artifacts: a scored idea, a validation plan, a packaged offer, and a customer-getting motion. Work through the exercises in order, and use the templates to keep your ideas, experiments, money, and weekly cadence in one place.

Finding and Scoring a Side Business Idea

Generate a long list of grounded ideas and rank them with a weighted matrix so you bet your limited hours on the strongest one.

Exercise: Define Your Launch Constraints

Before you pick an idea, write down the box it must fit inside. Be honest about hours, cash, and your employment situation. These constraints are not limitations to resent; they are the design spec for a side business that survives.

- How many focused hours per week can you realistically commit on weeknights versus weekends?

- What is your hard cash budget for the first ninety days of testing?

- What does your employment agreement say about outside work, non-competes, and IP ownership, and what will you do to stay clearly on the safe side?

- What is the minimum monthly profit that would make this worth your time?

Exercise: Run the Three Idea Engines

Set a ninety-minute timer and mine ideas from all three sources without filtering. Quantity first; you are aiming for at least twenty raw ideas. Use the Idea Bank template to capture them.

- Skills audit: list every skill you have been paid for, taught, or do faster than peers, and one offer each could become.

- Pain mining: copy five real complaints from reviews, subreddits, or groups that start with I wish or I hate that I have to.

- Market following: name five categories on Etsy, Upwork, Fiverr, or Gumroad where money is already moving that you could enter.

- For your ten favorites, write the specific person who has the problem in one short phrase.

Worksheet: Weighted Idea Scorecard

Pick your top five ideas and score each from one to five on every criterion, then multiply by the listed weight and total. Maximum score is seventy-five. Above fifty-five is a strong candidate; below forty, drop it. Record the numbers in the Idea Bank template.

Idea name and the specific person it serves

Demand evidence score (1-5) times weight 3

Founder fit score (1-5) times weight 2

Time to first revenue score (1-5) times weight 3

Startup cost score (1-5) times weight 2

Margin and pricing score (1-5) times weight 2

Day-job safety score (1-5) times weight 3

Weighted total (out of 75) and decide, drop, or shortlist

Checklist: Ready to Validate Checklist

- I have written down my hours, cash, and employment constraints.
- I generated at least twenty raw ideas across all three engines.
- I named a specific customer for each shortlisted idea.
- I scored my top five ideas with fixed weights in the matrix.
- I selected one idea scoring above fifty-five to validate first.
- I confirmed my chosen idea is clearly outside my employer's domain.

Validating Demand Before You Build

Run cheap experiments that produce real demand signals, ending with the strongest signal of all: a stranger paying you before the product exists.

Exercise: Plan and Run Problem Interviews

Schedule at least eight conversations using The Mom Test rules: talk about their life not your idea, ask about the past not the future, and let them talk eighty percent of the time. Log each one in the Validation Tracker.

- Who are eight to ten people who likely have this problem, and where will you find them?
 - Write four questions that ask about the last time they faced the problem and what it cost them.
 - After each interview, note: are they currently spending money or significant time on this problem?
 - Across all interviews, what pattern of behavior or workaround keeps showing up?
-

Worksheet: Smoke-Test Landing Page Spec

Draft every element of your one-page demand test before you build it in Carrd or a similar tool. Fill each field with the actual copy you will publish, then set your pass threshold in advance so you cannot move the goalposts.

Headline naming the specific person and outcome

Three transformation bullets (results, not features)

Single call to action (waitlist, early access, or buy)

Price anchor being tested

Traffic sources and target number of visitors (aim 100-200)

Tools chosen (landing page, email capture, payment)

Pass threshold: signups or conversion rate that means proceed

Exercise: Design Your Pre-Sale

Plan a pre-sale that takes real money before the product exists. Be transparent that it is a founding-member offer, set a go or no-go number, and promise a full refund if you fail to deliver by the stated date.

- What founding-member discount or bonus will you offer for buying before it is built?
 - How many pre-sales by what date is your go or no-go threshold?
 - How will you collect payment and handle refunds (Stripe, Gumroad, or invoice)?
 - What exact promise and delivery date are you making to early buyers?
-

Checklist: Demand Validated Checklist

- I completed at least eight problem interviews and logged them.
 - I found concrete evidence people already spend money or time on this problem.
 - I published a smoke-test page and drove at least one hundred real visitors to it.
 - I set a pass threshold before launch and recorded whether I hit it.
 - I made a transparent pre-sale offer with a refund promise.
 - I have at least three to five paid pre-orders or a clear, cheap no.
-

Building and Pricing a Minimum Viable Offer

Design the smallest offer that delivers a real result, price it for profit, and package it so a stranger can buy with confidence.

Worksheet: Scope Your Minimum Viable Offer

Cut your offer to the smallest deliverable that still solves the core problem for one specific use case. For every feature you list, apply the scoping question and decide keep or cut. Set a hard ship date and scope backward from it.

Core problem this offer solves for one specific customer

Delivery format (service, digital product, cohort, or concierge)

Features or components, each marked KEEP or CUT

The single complete result version one must deliver

Hard ship date (two to four weeks out)

What you will do manually by hand for the first few customers

Exercise: Set a Price for Profit

Move from fear-based pricing to value-based pricing. Research competitor prices first to set an anchor, quantify the value of the outcome you create, then choose a price that makes a few sales a month meaningful. Use the Money template to model it.

- What do three comparable offers charge, and where will you position relative to them?
 - What is the dollar value of the result you create (hours saved, money made, risk avoided)?
 - What three tiers could you offer, and what is the middle price you want most buyers to pick?
 - How many sales at your chosen price hit your minimum monthly profit goal?
-

Worksheet: Buyable Offer One-Pager

Turn your capability into a named, scoped, ready-to-buy offer. Fill every field, then reread it as the buyer and close any question that arises. If a stranger cannot buy it from this page without talking to you, keep tightening it.

Offer name (who it is for and what they get)

Promise (specific outcome plus timeframe)

Deliverables (exactly what the buyer receives)

Price and terms (number, inclusions, revision limit, payment)

Proof (samples or testimonials)

Guarantee or risk-reducer

Scope boundaries and what triggers an extra charge

Checklist: Offer Ready Checklist

- I scoped a minimum viable offer with a hard ship date.
- I researched competitor prices and set a value-based price.
- I built a price that makes a few sales a month meaningful.
- I wrote a one-page offer a stranger could buy without a call.
- I defined revision limits and scope boundaries in writing.
- I set up a one-click payment link for checkout.

First Customers, Money, and a Sustainable Cadence

Land your first ten paying customers through low-cost channels, set up clean money and legal basics, and build a weekly rhythm that protects your day job.

Exercise: Build Your First-Ten Outreach List

The first ten customers come one at a time through personal effort, not funnels. Build a list of fifty people or businesses that match your customer profile and plan a daily, personalized outreach motion. Track every conversation in the Validation Tracker.

- List fifty prospects who fit your customer profile, prioritizing warm and two-step connections.

- Write a short outreach message that leads with their problem, not your product.

- How many personalized messages will you send each day, and in which communities will you participate?

- What testimonial and referral ask will you make the moment you deliver a win?

Worksheet: Money and Legal Setup Record

Complete each field as you finish that step. The goal is a clean line between business and personal money plus a plan for taxes you will owe. Confirm tax specifics with a professional for your location.

Business checking account opened (bank and date)

Bookkeeping tool in use (Wave, QuickBooks, or other)

Payment processor and fee assumption baked into pricing

Tax set-aside percentage and the savings account holding it

Quarterly estimated-tax reminder dates

Business structure now (sole prop, LLC) and trigger to formalize

Client agreement template covering scope, payment, and ownership

Worksheet: Weekly Operating Cadence

Design a repeatable weekly rhythm you can hold for months. Block execution and deep-work time on your calendar, batch similar tasks, and protect the boundary with your day job. Track effort and results in the Weekly Cadence template.

Two or three weeknight execution blocks (days and times)

One longer weekend deep-work block (day and length)

Top eighty-twenty activities to prioritize this week

Metrics tracked: conversations, offers, revenue, customers, hours

Boundaries protecting your day job and your rest

Checklist: Launch and Sustain Checklist

- I built a list of fifty prospects and started daily personalized outreach.
- I am tracking conversations, offers, and conversion rate.
- I opened a separate business bank account and chose a bookkeeping tool.
- I set aside twenty-five to thirty percent of net income for taxes.
- I blocked weekly execution and deep-work time on my calendar.
- I collected my first ten paying customers plus testimonials.
- I confirmed my day-job performance and personal rest are protected.

Your Action Plan

1. Week 1: Write your constraints, run the three idea engines, and score your top five ideas in the matrix; commit to one.
2. Week 2: Recruit and complete at least eight problem interviews; confirm people already spend money or time on the problem.
3. Week 3: Build a smoke-test landing page, drive one hundred-plus visitors, and set your pass threshold in advance.
4. Week 4: Launch a transparent pre-sale with a refund promise; aim for three to five paid pre-orders as your go signal.
5. Week 5: Scope a minimum viable offer with a hard ship date and decide what you will deliver manually by hand.
6. Week 6: Research competitor prices, set a value-based price with three tiers, and write your one-page buyable offer.
7. Week 7: Open a business bank account, set up bookkeeping and a payment link, and start a tax set-aside account.
8. Week 8: Build a fifty-prospect list and begin daily personalized outreach; track every conversation and offer.
9. Week 9: Deliver to early customers, collect testimonials and referrals, and revisit your price after the first sales.
10. Week 10 and on: Lock in a weekly cadence, watch your few core metrics, and protect your day job and your rest while you scale what worked.

