

THE

\$100 MARKETING PLAN

What Actually Works Now for Businesses with More Hustle Than Budget



Contents

ACT 1

Foundations

Chapter 1	.....	The New Rules
Chapter 2	.....	Know Your Real People
Chapter 3	.....	Your Message in One Sentence

ACT 2

The Channels

Chapter 4	.....	Email
Chapter 5	.....	Organic Content & Search
Chapter 6	.....	Paid on a Micro-Budget
Chapter 7	.....	Partnerships & Word of Mouth
Chapter 8	.....	Your Online Presence

ACT 3

The System

Chapter 9	.....	Measure What Matters
Chapter 10	.....	Your Weekly Marketing Rhythm
Chapter 11	.....	Put It Together: Your 90-Day Plan

THE \$100 MARKETING PLAN

ACT I

01

FOUNDATIONS

Your audience, your message, your positioning — the work that makes everything else in this guide worth doing.

CHAPTER 1

01

The New Rules

Why marketing feels broken, why it isn't, and why being small is now a strategic advantage.

• • •

A solo business owner posted a social media video last year that perfectly captured the current marketing landscape. It showed her at her desk, surrounded by sticky notes labeled "SEO," "TikTok," "AI content," "email funnels," "Threads," and "podcast?" with a caption: "Me trying to figure out if the marketing advice from six months ago still works." It got thousands of comments from other small business owners saying some version of: "This is my life."

If that resonates, you're not imagining things. But here's the thing: the core strategy behind *The \$100 Startup* was simple—find the convergence of what you're good at and what people will pay for, then get your offer in front of the right people. That strategy hasn't expired. The principles of value, freedom, and starting small still work exactly as advertised.

But the *tactics*—where you show up, how you get attention, what tools you use, which channels reward effort and which ones eat it—those have shifted dramatically. And if you're using a marketing playbook from even three or four years ago, you're fighting on terrain that's already moved underneath you.

This guide exists to bridge that gap. The strategy is timeless. The tactics need updating.

Let's start with what actually changed.

Shift #1: Nobody Trusts Anything Anymore

People have always been skeptical of advertising. That's not new. What's new is that skepticism has spread to *everything*—influencer recommendations, online reviews, news articles, AI-generated content, even word-of-mouth when it feels too polished.

The average person encounters thousands of marketing messages daily and has gotten extremely good at filtering them out. Not consciously—they don't sit there evaluating each ad. They've just developed a reflex. Anything that looks like marketing, sounds like marketing, or smells like marketing gets skipped.

This is actually great news for you.

Because trust hasn't disappeared. It's just concentrated differently. People still trust *people*—specifically, people they feel they know, people who are clearly not performing, and people who have been consistently useful over time. They trust the friend who recommends a restaurant, not the restaurant's Instagram ad. They trust the newsletter writer who's been genuinely helpful for six months, not the one who appeared yesterday with a "free masterclass."

As a micro-business owner, this is your single biggest advantage. You *are* a person. Not a brand identity developed by a creative agency. Not a faceless company. You. And the relationship you build with your customers—through your emails, your content, your direct interactions—is something a larger competitor literally cannot replicate at scale.

The trust economy rewards smallness. But only if you actually show up as a real person, not as a small business trying to cosplay as a big one.

Shift #2: The Algorithms Turned Hostile

In 2012, you could post something on Facebook and most of your followers would see it. You could publish a blog post with the right keywords and rank on Google within weeks. You could build a YouTube channel by consistently uploading decent videos.

Those days are gone.

Every major platform now exists primarily to serve its *own* business model, not yours. Facebook and Instagram show your posts to a fraction of your followers unless you pay. Google's search results are increasingly filled with its own features, ads, and AI-generated overviews that answer questions before anyone clicks through to your site. TikTok's algorithm can launch you into virality or bury you completely, and you have almost no control over which one happens.

The practical result: organic reach on platforms you don't own has collapsed. Building your entire marketing strategy on any single platform is like building your house on rented land. The landlord can change the terms whenever they want, and they do—regularly.

This doesn't mean you should ignore platforms. It means you should use them strategically, with eyes wide open, and never let any platform be the *only* way customers find you. The businesses that weather algorithm changes are the ones that diversified before they needed to—not the ones scrambling after their reach drops 80% overnight.

The most important channel you can build? The one you own. We'll get deep into this in Chapter 4 (email), but the principle applies everywhere in this guide: own the relationship, use platforms to feed it.

Shift #3: AI Changed the Game (But Not the Way You Think)

By now you've probably seen the breathless headlines: AI will replace marketers, AI will write all your content, AI will make everything effortless. Let's be more precise about what's actually happening.

AI is very good at *production*—generating drafts, variations, summaries, repurposing content across formats. Things that used to take a solo business owner hours (writing five email subject lines, creating social posts from a blog article, drafting ad copy variations) can now happen in minutes. This is a genuine superpower for someone operating without a team.

Here's what that looks like in practice: a meal prep business owner writes one blog post about weeknight dinners. She feeds it to an AI tool and within ten minutes has a week's worth of social media captions, three email subject line options, and a 60-second video script—all adapted to each platform's format. Tasks that would have taken her entire Wednesday afternoon are done before her coffee gets cold. That's the real use case, and it's genuinely powerful.

AI is mediocre at *strategy*—deciding what to say, who to say it to, and why it matters. It can produce a perfectly grammatical blog post that says absolutely nothing original. It can generate a marketing plan that sounds impressive and is completely generic. It doesn't know your customers, your market, or what makes your business different. It's not going to figure that out for you.

And AI has created a new problem: a flood of competent-but-forgettable content. When everyone can produce passable blog posts, emails, and social content at scale, "passable" stops being good enough. The bar for attention has actually gone up, not down, because there's simply more stuff out there competing for the same eyeballs.

Throughout this guide, AI shows up as a tool in specific, practical ways—places where it genuinely saves you time and makes your work better. But it's always the tool, never the strategy. The strategy is yours.

Shift #4: Attention Is Shorter, Fragmented, and More Expensive

This one is simple but has massive implications: the window you have to capture someone's interest has shrunk. Not just on social media—everywhere. Email subject lines get a second of evaluation. Website headlines get three seconds, maybe. Even in-person, the "what do you do?" conversation has less patience for a rambling answer than it used to.

Paid attention (advertising) has gotten more expensive across virtually every platform. The cost to reach a thousand people on Facebook has roughly tripled since 2018. Google Ads in competitive niches can cost \$10+ per click. For a micro-business spending \$200 a month on marketing, there's very little margin for wasted spend.

Meanwhile, earned attention (organic reach, word-of-mouth, content) has gotten harder to get but remains massively underpriced for those willing to invest the time. The businesses winning attention right now aren't the ones spending the most—they're the ones being the most specific, useful, and human. Which, again, plays directly to the strengths of a small operation.

Why Being Small Is Now a Strategic Advantage

Let's connect these four shifts to one conclusion, because it's the thesis of this entire guide:

In a marketing landscape defined by distrust, hostile algorithms, AI noise, and expensive attention, being small, personal, and genuine is not a limitation. It's a competitive edge.

Here's why, specifically:

You can be a real person. Big companies spend millions trying to seem relatable and human. You don't have to try. You already are. Your customers can email you and get a reply from *you*. That's not scalable—and that's exactly the point. Trust accrues to individuals faster than to brands.

You can move fast. A new platform emerges, a tactic stops working, a trend aligns with your business—you can respond in hours, not quarters. You don't need approval from three departments and a legal review. Speed is a genuine strategic advantage, and nobody's faster than a solo operator with a clear plan.

You can go deep instead of wide. You don't need to reach millions of people. You need to reach the right hundred, or the right thousand. That means you can focus on the specific communities, channels, and relationships where your best customers actually are—instead of spray-and-praying across every platform.

You can make AI your unfair advantage. A solo operator who uses AI well can produce output that used to require a small marketing team. Not because the AI replaces the thinking, but because it handles the grunt work—leaving you to focus on strategy, relationships, and the stuff that actually moves the needle.

You don't need a big budget. The most effective marketing tactics for micro-businesses—email, partnerships, referrals, targeted content—are all cheap or free. The expensive stuff (mass advertising, brand campaigns, programmatic display) is the stuff that mostly works for companies with massive budgets and broad audiences. You're not competing on that field.

What This Guide Is (and What It Isn't)

This is a marketing guide for people who would rather be doing almost anything else.

It's not a course. There are no modules, no daily assignments, no certification at the end. It's a reference—something you read once, keep on your (digital) shelf, and come back to when you need a specific answer.

It's organized in three acts. **Act 1 (Chapters 1–3)** covers the foundations—the shifts that changed marketing, understanding your audience, and nailing your message. **Act 2 (Chapters 4–8)** covers the channels—email, content, paid ads, partnerships, and your online presence. **Act 3 (Chapters 9–11)** covers the system—what to measure, the weekly routine, and your 90-day plan.

Each chapter is designed to stand on its own. If you already have your message dialed in, skip Chapter 3. If you have no interest in paid advertising, skip Chapter 6. The chapters are sequenced logically, but nobody's going to quiz you on the order.

Along the way, you'll find companion tools—a budget calculator, a weekly tracker, a swipe file, a prompt library, and more. These aren't bonus fluff. They're the practical layer that turns the ideas into action. Use them.

. . .

The landscape has changed. Some of the specific advice from *The \$100 Startup's* marketing chapters—about Facebook pages, about blog SEO, about certain pricing tactics—is showing its age. That's inevitable with tactical advice. Tactics have a shelf life.

But the core of it—find the convergence, provide real value, start small, and get your offer in front of the right people—is as true now as it was then. The difference is *how* you get in front of those people, and what the right moves look like today.

That's what the next ten chapters are for. We'll start with the most important question: who, exactly, are you trying to reach?

CHAPTER 2

02

Know Your Real People

Before you pick channels or write copy, know exactly who your best customers are—by name, not by demographic.

• • •

Quick exercise: name your ten best customers. Not a type of customer. Not a demographic profile. Actual names. People who bought from you, loved it, told their friends, and would buy again.

If you can do that easily, you're ahead of most. If you can't—if your mind goes to vague categories like "women 25–45" or "small business owners"—that's the problem this chapter solves.

Every marketing decision you'll make in the rest of this guide flows from knowing who you're actually talking to. Which channels to use? Depends on where your people are. What to say? Depends on what they care about. How to spend your budget? Depends on where their attention already goes. Without specific people in mind, you're guessing. With them, you're strategizing.

Demographics Are Dead (Mostly)

The \$100 Startup made the point that your target market has nothing to do with traditional demographics—the group of people who read the blog that launched the book crossed every age, gender, and income line. What united them was a shared value: wanting to live unconventionally. That insight matters even more now.

Demographic targeting was a product of mass media. When the only way to reach people was through TV, radio, and print, you needed broad categories to buy media efficiently. “Women 18–34” was a useful shorthand because it told the ad buyer which shows to buy.

You’re not buying TV ads. You’re a micro-business talking to real people. And real people are defined by what they *care about*, what they’re *trying to do*, and where they *spend attention*—not by their age, gender, or zip code.

This is what makes the “customer avatar” exercise that’s popular in marketing courses mostly useless. You know the one: “Meet Sarah, she’s 34, lives in Austin, makes \$75K, drinks oat milk, and listens to NPR.” You’ve just described a fictional character who doesn’t exist. Meanwhile, your actual best customers are a 52-year-old plumber, a 28-year-old freelance designer, and a retired teacher—and they all found you for the same reason.

Now, a caveat: if you’re pre-launch with zero customers, some form of hypothesis about your audience is necessary. You can’t name ten real buyers if you haven’t sold anything yet. The difference is treating that hypothesis as a starting point to test, not a permanent profile to market to. As soon as you have real customers, let the real data replace the guess.

Instead of inventing an avatar, study your real people.

The “Name Ten People” Exercise

This is the most important exercise in this guide. It takes about twenty minutes, and it will shape every marketing decision you make.

If you already have customers, name ten of your best. “Best” means some combination of: they bought (or bought again), they were easy to work with, they got great results, and they’d recommend you. Write their actual names.

If you don’t have customers yet, name ten people you believe would be your ideal first buyers. People you actually know—not archetypes, not demographics. Friends, acquaintances, colleagues, social media connections. People you could send a message to today.

Now, for each person, answer five questions:

1. What problem did you solve for them (or could you solve)? Not “helped them with marketing” but “helped them figure out what to put on their homepage so it didn't sound like a corporate brochure.” This answer feeds directly into your messaging work in Chapter 3.

2. Where do they spend attention online? Which platforms? Which newsletters? Which podcasts? Which communities? You don't need to survey them—you probably already know this from their social activity, their conversations, what they share and reference. This answer determines your channel strategy in Chapters 4–7.

3. What do they trust? Peer recommendations? Expert endorsements? Reviews? Case studies? Data? Personal experience? Different people weigh these differently, and it matters for how you market to people like them. This shapes your social proof strategy in Chapter 8 and your partnership approach in Chapter 7.

4. What do they ignore? Just as important. Do they skip Instagram entirely? Never open promotional emails? Distrust influencer recommendations? Knowing what *doesn't* reach them saves you from wasting time on channels they'll never see. Especially relevant when making decisions in Chapters 5 and 6.

5. How did they find you (or how would they)? Referral? Search? Social media? A specific post or recommendation? This tells you which channels are already working—or which ones have the most potential. This answer drives your 90-day plan in Chapter 11.

When you're done, you'll notice patterns. Your ten people won't be identical, but they'll share traits that matter more than demographics: similar problems, similar attention patterns, similar trust signals. That's your audience—defined by behavior and need, not by age and income.

What the Patterns Tell You

Let's say you run through the exercise and notice that seven of your ten people found you through a recommendation from someone they trust. That's a massive signal—your marketing strategy should lean heavily on referrals and partnerships (Chapter 7), not on paid ads.

Or maybe six of your ten people are active in a specific online community—a Facebook group, a subreddit, a Slack channel. That tells you exactly where to show up with helpful content (Chapter 5) and maybe where to test a small ad spend (Chapter 6).

Or you discover that your best customers all came in through email, and they're the most engaged people on your list. That tells you to double down on email strategy (Chapter 4) and treat your list as the center of your marketing, not a side channel.

The exercise isn't just about knowing your people. It's about seeing the system that's already in motion—or the system that's waiting to be activated.

Beyond Your First Ten

Your initial ten people are a starting point, not a ceiling. As your business grows, you'll develop a more nuanced understanding of your audience. Here are three ways to deepen it over time:

Listen to the language they use

Pay attention to how your customers describe their problems and your solution. Not how you'd describe it—how *they* describe it. This shows up in emails they send you, reviews they leave, questions they ask, and how they explain what you do to other people. Their language is almost always simpler, more specific, and more emotionally honest than yours. Use it. It's the raw material for every piece of marketing you'll write.

Notice who you don't want

This is underrated. As you identify your best customers, you'll also notice the ones who were difficult, demanded more than they paid for, or didn't get results. That's valuable data too. A clear picture of who you *don't* want to attract helps you write marketing that filters as well as it attracts. The best marketing repels the wrong people gently while magnetizing the right ones.

Look at the “watering holes”

Watering holes are the places your people already gather—not platforms in general, but specific communities, newsletters, events, podcasts, and groups. A yoga instructor’s best customers might all follow the same wellness newsletter. A freelance developer’s best clients might all hang out in a specific Slack community. A bookkeeper who serves creative freelancers might find her entire audience lurking in a single Facebook group for Etsy sellers. The trick is specificity. “LinkedIn” is not a watering hole. “The Freelance Business Community on LinkedIn where your three best clients post every week” is. The more specific you can get, the more your marketing efforts concentrate on the people most likely to become customers. Find the watering holes and you’ve found your marketing strategy’s address.

The Convergence Connection

The \$100 Startup introduced the concept of convergence—the intersection of what you love (or are good at) and what people will pay for. That same idea applies to finding your audience.

The sweet spot for your marketing isn’t just “people who need what you sell.” It’s the overlap of three things: people who have the problem you solve, people who are *aware* they have that problem, and people who are *reachable* with the resources you have. A massive audience that you can’t reach is useless. A reachable audience that doesn’t need you is a waste. You want the intersection.

Your ten people exercise reveals this intersection in real terms. These aren’t hypothetical segments—they’re real humans you can contact, learn from, and build around.

AI and Audience Research

Three specific ways AI accelerates the audience work in this chapter:

Analyzing patterns. Feed your customer list (names removed if you prefer) into an AI tool and ask it to identify common traits, behaviors, or themes. It’s good at spotting patterns across data you’ve already collected.

Finding watering holes. Describe your best customers and ask for communities, forums, newsletters, and groups where people like them might gather. You'll need to verify these manually, but it's a solid brainstorming accelerator.

Generating survey questions. If you want to learn more about your audience, AI can draft interview or survey questions based on what you already know. Much faster than staring at a blank form.

What it won't tell you: who your best customers actually *are*. That part requires selling to real humans and paying attention to what happens.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

Step 1: Write down the names of ten real people—your best customers, or your ideal first customers. Actual names, not categories.

Step 2: For each one, answer the five questions: what problem, where's their attention, what they trust, what they ignore, how they found you.

Step 3: Look for patterns. Circle the commonalities—especially around attention and trust, since those directly drive your channel strategy.

Step 4: Write a brief description (two or three sentences) of who your marketing is *for*. Not a demographic profile—a behavioral one. Something like: "Freelancers in their first two years who are good at their craft but overwhelmed by the business side, and who find their information through peer recommendations and a small number of trusted newsletters."

Keep this description somewhere visible. You'll come back to it in every chapter that follows.

You now know who you're talking to. Next, we'll figure out what to say.

CHAPTER 3

03

Your Message in One Sentence

What you sell, who it's for, and why it matters—in language a human would actually say.

• • •

Here's a test. Go to your website—or your Instagram bio, or your business card, or wherever you describe what you do—and read it out loud.

Now imagine saying that exact sentence to someone at a coffee shop who just asked, “So, what do you do?”

If it sounds natural, skip this chapter. You won't.

Most micro-business owners fail at marketing not because they pick the wrong channel, write bad ads, or post at the wrong time. They fail because when someone lands on their page or hears their pitch, the response is a polite nod and a quick mental exit. The message doesn't land. It's too vague, too jargony, or too focused on the wrong things.

This is the most fixable problem in marketing. It's also the one people skip past because it feels too basic. It's not. Every tactic in this guide—email, content, ads, partnerships—depends on having a clear message underneath it. If your message is muddled, every channel you try will underperform. If your message is sharp, even mediocre execution gets results.

So before we talk about where to show up, let's nail what to say when you get there.

The Curse of Knowing Too Much

You know your business better than anyone. That's the problem.

When you've spent months or years building something, you see all its nuances. The twelve features. The three different customer types. The origin story. The technical differentiator. And when someone asks what you do, you try to communicate all of it at once.

The result is usually something like: "We're a holistic wellness platform leveraging evidence-based methodologies to help individuals optimize their physical and mental well-being through personalized, AI-driven recommendations and community-supported accountability frameworks."

This is what happens when smart people describe their businesses. It's accurate. It's comprehensive. And it makes people's eyes glaze over in about four seconds.

The fix isn't dumbing it down. It's choosing what to emphasize. A good message doesn't describe everything your business does. It says the one thing that makes someone lean forward and ask, "Tell me more."

The \$100 Startup made the case for the difference between features and benefits—the V6 Ranch doesn't sell horse rides, they sell the chance to "become someone else, even if just for a day." That distinction matters even more now, because your message isn't just something you say in person. It needs to work in a subject line, a social bio, a Google ad, a podcast introduction, and a three-second scroll past your post. It has to do heavy lifting in very little space.

The One-Sentence Formula

Here's the simplest version of your message:

I help [specific type of person] [achieve a specific outcome] without [the thing they want to avoid].

Three blanks. That's it. Let's look at each one.

[Specific type of person]

Not “everyone.” Not “anyone who needs help with X.” The more specific this is, the more powerful your message becomes. This is directly connected to the work you did (or will do) in Chapter 2—identifying your real people.

“Busy parents” is better than “people.” “Busy parents who want to cook healthy dinners but are wiped out by 6 PM” is better still. You’re not excluding anyone by being specific—you’re making the right people feel seen.

[Achieve a specific outcome]

This is the benefit, not the feature. Not what your product *is*, but what it *does* for someone.

A bookkeeper doesn’t “provide accounting services.” She helps freelancers stop dreading tax season. A web designer doesn’t “build websites.” He helps service businesses look established enough that clients trust them on first visit.

The outcome should be something your customer actually says out loud—or at least thinks. Listen for the language they use. It’s almost never the language you’d use.

[The thing they want to avoid]

This is the secret weapon of the formula. It’s what makes people nod. Because your customers aren’t just looking for a positive outcome—they’re trying to dodge something specific.

They want to eat healthier *without* spending two hours cooking. They want a professional website *without* learning to code. They want to grow their business *without* becoming a full-time content creator.

The “without” clause does two things: it shows you understand their real situation, and it differentiates you from every competitor who just promises the positive outcome. Everyone promises results. The “without” says *I know what you’re actually worried about*.

From Muddled to Sharp: Five Examples

Let's see the formula in action. Five businesses, each with a "before" (what the owner originally said) and an "after" (using the formula).

Meal prep service *Before:* "We provide customized weekly meal preparation using locally sourced organic ingredients with flexible dietary accommodation." *After:* "I help busy parents put healthy dinners on the table every night — without spending their whole Sunday cooking."

Business coach *Before:* "I'm a certified executive coach specializing in leadership development and organizational transformation." *After:* "I help first-time managers stop feeling like impostors — without reading a stack of leadership books."

Bookkeeper *Before:* "Full-service bookkeeping and financial management for small businesses and independent contractors." *After:* "I help freelancers stop dreading tax season — without learning accounting software."

Web designer *Before:* "Custom website design and development for small businesses using modern frameworks and responsive design principles." *After:* "I help service businesses look legitimate online — without a five-figure budget or a six-month timeline."

Online course creator (yoga) *Before:* "Virtual yoga instruction blending traditional practices with modern wellness approaches for a holistic mind-body experience." *After:* "I help desk-bound professionals undo the damage of sitting all day — in 15 minutes before work."

Notice the pattern: every "before" describes what the business does. Every "after" describes what the customer gets. The shift is subtle but the impact is enormous.

The Coffee Shop Test

You have a sentence. Now pressure-test it.

Read it out loud to someone who has no idea what you do—your neighbor, your barber, your mother-in-law. Watch their face. You're looking for one of two responses:

Response A: "Oh, interesting. How does that work?" (This is what you want. They're leaning in.)

Response B: "Oh... cool." (This is a polite exit. Your message didn't land.)

If you get Response B, the problem is almost always one of three things:

Too vague. "I help people improve their health." Which people? Improve how? This could describe a personal trainer, a therapist, a meal kit company, or a supplement brand. If it could describe fifty businesses, it describes none of them.

Too focused on you. "I use a proprietary framework combining CBT with positive psychology." Your customer doesn't care about your methodology. They care about their problem. Save the framework for after they're interested.

Too clever. "We make Mondays feel like Fridays." Cute, but what do you actually *do*? Clever taglines work for Nike. They don't work for a business nobody's heard of. Clarity beats cleverness every single time at this stage.

Put It Everywhere

Once you have your sentence, it shouldn't live in a Google Doc collecting dust. It should show up—in some form—in every place your business talks to the world:

Your website headline. The first thing people see when they land on your site. Not "Welcome to [Business Name]"—the outcome you deliver. We'll dig deeper into this in Chapter 8, but the headline is where your one sentence does its most important work.

Your social media bios. You have 150 characters on Instagram and a few lines on LinkedIn. Your sentence, compressed. No need to list every service—just the core promise.

Your email signature. Under your name, a one-line version of what you do. It's free advertising on every email you send.

Your elevator pitch. When someone asks what you do at a dinner party, networking event, or your kid's soccer game. Same sentence, spoken out loud.

Your ad copy. If you run any paid promotion (Chapter 6), the message is the foundation. The targeting, creative, and offer all build on top of it.

Consistency matters here. Not because you need to be robotic, but because repetition builds recognition. If your website says one thing, your Instagram says another, and your email says a third, you're making people work too hard to understand you. A practical tip: copy your one sentence into a note on your phone. The next time you update any profile, bio, or page, paste it in first. Then edit from there. Consistency becomes automatic when you start from the same source.

Beyond the One Sentence

Your core sentence is the foundation. But you'll need variations for different contexts. Here are the three most useful expansions:

The Elevator Pitch (2–3 sentences)

Your one sentence, plus context. Use the “you know how” formula:

You know how [common problem]? I [what you do about it]. So instead of [frustrating status quo], my customers [better outcome].

Example: “You know how freelancers ignore their finances until April and then panic? I handle all their bookkeeping month by month, so instead of a week of stress and scrambling for receipts, tax season is just... done.”

The Social Bio (under 150 characters)

Your sentence, stripped to its bones:

[What you do] for [who]. [One proof point]. [What to do next].

Example: “Healthy meal prep for busy families. 2,000+ dinners delivered in Portland. Order by Wednesday → eat by Sunday.”

The Referral Script

What you say when you're asking for word-of-mouth. This one's underrated:

*Hey [name], I'm looking for more people like you—[what makes them great].
Know anyone who [specific situation]? I'd love an intro.*

Example: "Hey Sarah, I'm looking for more clients like you—freelancers who are doing well but dread the money side. Know anyone who's putting off getting their books in order? I'd love an intro."

(You'll find fill-in-the-blank versions of all these in the Marketing Mad Libs worksheet. That's the companion tool for this chapter—print it out or fill it in digitally, and you'll walk away with ready-to-use versions of each.)

AI and Messaging

Your one sentence has to come from you — AI doesn't know your customers or what makes you different, and every AI-generated "about us" paragraph sounds like it came from the same business school template. But once you have the sentence, AI becomes extremely useful. Give it your core message and ask for ten versions optimized for a social bio, or five subject lines built on your core promise. You'll get solid drafts to edit in minutes instead of staring at a blinking cursor.

The sequence: you figure out the message first. AI helps you adapt it for different contexts. The AI Prompt Library companion resource includes specific prompts for turning your core message into ad copy, email sequences, and landing page headlines. But they all start with your sentence.

CHAPTER 4

04 Email

The only channel you actually own. Here's how to build it, write for it, and make it work.



Every few years, someone publishes an article declaring that email is dead. And every year, email continues to outperform every other marketing channel for small businesses. It's not even close.

The reason is simple: email is the only channel where you control the relationship. Your Instagram followers belong to Instagram. Your TikTok audience belongs to TikTok. Your email list belongs to you. No algorithm decides whether your subscribers see your message. No platform can cut your reach by 80% overnight. You write something, you send it, it shows up in their inbox.

That's an extraordinary advantage—and yet most micro-business owners either don't have a list, have one they never email, or send emails so generic that subscribers mentally file them in the same category as utility bills.

This chapter covers three things: how to build a list, how to write emails people actually open, and the three automated sequences every micro-business needs. If you do nothing else from this guide, do this. Email alone can sustain a business.

Building a List People Actually Want to Be On

The old playbook was simple: put a "subscribe to my newsletter" box on your website and wait. This still works—barely. The problem is that "newsletter" has become code for "random emails you'll never read." The inbox is more crowded and more guarded than it was five years ago. People need a reason to hand over their email address.

The offer

The most reliable way to build a list is to offer something specific and immediately useful in exchange for an email address. Not a vague promise of “updates” or “tips”—a concrete thing.

This could be a one-page guide, a template, a checklist, a short video, a discount code, a mini-course, or a tool. The bar is lower than most people think. It doesn't need to be a 50-page ebook. Some of the highest-converting opt-in offers are single-page PDFs that solve one specific problem. What matters is that it's relevant to the people you want on your list and useful enough that they'd feel good about getting it even if they never heard from you again.

The free resource library on 100startup.com—six guides covering business plans, launch checklists, and similar topics—is exactly this model. Each guide is useful on its own. Collectively, they build a list of people who are clearly interested in building micro-businesses. The offer matches the audience.

Where to put it

Your opt-in offer should be visible in every place people encounter your business: your website homepage, your about page, your blog posts, your social media bios, and your email signature. Most people put it in one place and wonder why growth is slow. The more surfaces you cover, the more opportunities you create.

On your website specifically, the three highest-converting positions are: the homepage above the fold (before any scrolling), the end of blog posts or content pages, and a dedicated landing page you can link to from social media and partnerships. You don't need all three on day one, but work toward them.

The real growth lever: partnerships

The fastest way to build a list isn't through your own website—it's through other people's audiences. Guest posts, podcast appearances, collaborations, and co-promotions put you in front of people who already trust the person introducing you. One well-placed guest article or podcast episode can generate more subscribers in a week than months of solo content. We'll cover this in depth in Chapter 7, but keep it in mind as you build: your list growth strategy and your partnership strategy are closely linked.

Writing Emails People Actually Open

Your open rate—the percentage of subscribers who actually open your emails—is the first metric that matters. If they don't open it, nothing else counts.

The average open rate for small business emails hovers around 20–25%. That means 75–80% of your list is ignoring you by default. The businesses that consistently hit 35–50%+ share a few traits:

They write subject lines like a person, not a marketer

Compare these two subject lines: “Unlocking Your Business Potential: 5 Strategies for Q2 Growth” vs. “a quick thing that's been working for me.” The first one sounds like it came from a marketing department. The second sounds like it came from a friend. Guess which one gets opened.

The best subject lines are short, specific, and slightly incomplete—they create just enough curiosity to earn the click without resorting to clickbait. Write them last, after you know what the email actually says.

They send from a person, not a brand

Emails from “Chris at 100 Startup” get opened more than emails from “100 Startup.” Emails from “Chris” get opened more than both. People open emails from people they recognize. If your business name is less recognizable than your own name, send from your name.

They're useful or interesting (pick at least one)

Every email should either teach something, share something genuinely interesting, or directly help the reader with a specific problem. If you can't answer “why would someone be glad they opened this?” before you hit send, don't hit send.

This doesn't mean every email needs to be a masterpiece. Some of the most effective emails are short, casual, and personal—a quick observation, a lesson learned, a useful link. Length doesn't equal value. Consistency and relevance do.

They have a regular cadence

Weekly is the sweet spot for most micro-businesses. Frequent enough that subscribers remember who you are, infrequent enough that it doesn't feel like a burden—for you or them. If weekly feels like too much, biweekly works. Monthly is too infrequent for most businesses; by the time the next email arrives, half your subscribers have forgotten they signed up.

Pick a day and stick with it. The specific day matters less than the consistency. Your subscribers will develop a habit around your cadence if you let them.

The Three Sequences Every Micro-Business Needs

Beyond your regular emails, there are three automated sequences that do heavy lifting while you focus on everything else. Set these up once and they run indefinitely.

1. The Welcome Sequence (3–5 emails)

This is what new subscribers receive in their first week or two. It's the most important sequence because it sets the tone for the entire relationship. First impressions in email work the same as first impressions in person.

Email 1 (immediately): Deliver whatever you promised (the free guide, template, etc.) and introduce yourself briefly. One or two sentences about who you are and what you do. Not your full life story—save that for later.

Email 2 (day 2–3): Share your best piece of content—a blog post, video, or resource that consistently gets the best response from your audience. This is your greatest hit. It demonstrates your value.

Email 3 (day 4–5): Tell your story. How you got here, why you do what you do, what you believe about your field. This is where the personal connection deepens.

Email 4–5 (day 7–10): Share a customer story or case study, then gently introduce what you sell. Not a hard pitch—just a clear, honest description of your product or service and who it's for. Many subscribers will never get this far, and that's fine. The ones who do are your warmest prospects.

2. The Sales Sequence (3–7 emails)

When you're launching something or actively promoting an offer, you need a dedicated sequence. This isn't your regular newsletter—it's a focused series sent over a specific window (typically 5–7 days for a launch, or 3–4 days for an ongoing promotion).

The structure: start with the problem your offer solves, share proof it works (customer results, your own results, relevant data), address the most common objections, and create genuine urgency (a real deadline, limited availability, or a bonus that expires). End with a clear call to action.

Most micro-businesses dramatically undersell. They mention their offer once, feel awkward, and never bring it up again. The reality: people are busy, they miss emails, and they need multiple touches before they act. Sending three to five emails about the same offer isn't pushy—it's effective. What's pushy is sending seven emails that say nothing new. Each email should add value, a new angle, or a different reason to act. For example, in a five-email launch sequence: Email 1 introduces the problem and the solution. Email 2 shares a customer success story. Email 3 addresses the biggest objection (usually price or time). Email 4 adds urgency with a deadline. Email 5 is a simple, direct last-chance reminder. Each one gives the reader a different reason to pay attention.

3. The Re-Engagement Sequence (2–3 emails)

Every list has subscribers who stopped opening emails. After 90 days of inactivity, trigger a short sequence:

Email 1: A friendly check-in. "Haven't heard from you in a while—still interested in [topic]?" Include a link to your best recent content.

Email 2 (3–5 days later): A direct ask. "Want to keep getting these emails? Click here to stay on the list."

If no response: Remove them. This feels counterintuitive—why would you shrink your list on purpose? Because inactive subscribers hurt your deliverability. Email providers like Gmail look at your engagement rate to decide whether to put your emails in the inbox or the spam folder. A smaller, engaged list is worth far more than a large, dead one.

The Deliverability Problem (and How to Avoid It)

Deliverability—whether your emails actually reach the inbox—has gotten more complicated. Gmail, Outlook, and other providers have tightened their filtering, and what used to land in the primary inbox now often ends up in the Promotions tab or worse.

You can't fully control this, but you can avoid the most common mistakes: don't buy email lists (ever), don't send to people who didn't opt in, clean your list regularly (the re-engagement sequence handles this), avoid spammy language in subject lines ("FREE!!!", "URGENT", excessive caps), and send consistently. Email providers reward consistent senders with good engagement metrics.

Technical setup matters too. Authenticate your sending domain (DKIM, SPF, DMARC—your email platform will walk you through this). It takes about fifteen minutes and significantly improves your inbox placement. These protocols essentially verify that you are who you say you are—without them, email providers treat you like a stranger who might be a spammer.

Which Tool to Use

The email platform landscape changes constantly, and specific recommendations will date quickly. Here's what to look for instead:

For most micro-businesses starting out, the priority is: a free or cheap tier that covers your list size, the ability to create automated sequences, a clean enough editor that your emails don't look broken on mobile, and reliable deliverability. Most of the major platforms (you know who they are—the names that come up when you search "email marketing for small business") meet these criteria.

Don't overthink the tool. The difference between platforms matters far less than whether you actually send emails consistently. Pick one, set up your welcome sequence, and start. You can always switch later.

AI and Email

Subject lines. Write your email, then ask an AI tool for ten subject line options. Pick the best one and tweak it. This alone can measurably improve your open rates.

Drafting sequences. Describe your welcome sequence goals and your brand voice, and AI can produce a solid first draft of all five emails. You'll need to edit heavily — it doesn't know your voice or your stories — but starting from a draft beats starting from a blank screen.

Repurposing content. Have a blog post or podcast episode that performed well? AI can turn it into an email in minutes. This is the "create once, distribute everywhere" approach that Chapter 5 covers in more detail.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

If you don't have an email list yet: Sign up for an email platform today, create a simple opt-in offer (even a one-page PDF), and put it on your website. This takes an afternoon, not a month.

If you have a list but rarely email it: Write one email this week. It doesn't need to be profound. Share something useful, something personal, or something interesting. Hit send. Then do it again next week.

If you have a list and email regularly: Set up your three sequences if you haven't already. Start with the welcome sequence—it has the biggest impact because every new subscriber sees it.

Email is your foundation. Every other channel in this guide is, at some level, a way to get people onto your email list and deepen the relationship from there. The businesses that thrive long-term are the ones that build a list of people who actually want to hear from them—and then deliver on that expectation, consistently, for months and years.

That said, people need to discover you before they can join your list. Let's talk about how they find you in the first place.

ACT II

02

THE CHANNELS

Where you show up, how you reach people, and how to choose the channels worth your time.

CHAPTER 5

05 Organic Content & Search

Creating content that gets found—without becoming a full-time content creator.

• • •

Let's get something out of the way: you do not need to be a content creator. You don't need a YouTube channel, a podcast, a blog with three posts a week, a TikTok presence, and a newsletter. If any marketing guru tells you that you need all of these, they are either selling you a course on content creation or they are themselves a content creator who has confused their career path with a universal strategy.

What you *do* need is a way for the right people to find you when they're looking for what you offer. That's what content does. Not content for content's sake—content as a discovery engine.

The challenge is that the discovery landscape has changed dramatically. Google now answers many queries directly through AI overviews, reducing click-through to websites. Social media algorithms favor platform-native content (posts, reels, stories) over links to your site. The sheer volume of content online means that "just publish and they'll come" hasn't worked for years.

So what actually works for a micro-business with limited time?

Create Once, Distribute Everywhere

This is the foundational principle. Instead of creating different content for every platform, create one substantial piece and adapt it for multiple channels.

Here's what this looks like in practice: You write one in-depth blog post (or record one video, or produce one podcast episode). That single piece becomes a social post (or several), an email to your list, a thread on whatever platform your audience uses, a short-form video clip, and a resource you can reference in future content and conversations.

The key word is *adapt*, not *copy*. You're not posting the same thing everywhere. You're extracting different angles, pulling out key insights, and reformatting them for each context. A 1,500-word blog post might yield a 200-word LinkedIn post about one specific insight, a 15-second video highlighting the main takeaway, three tweets expanding on different points, and an email sharing the personal story behind the piece. The key is that a 200-word LinkedIn post isn't a summary of the blog post—it's a standalone insight that was *buried* in the blog post, now given room to breathe on its own.

This approach works because it respects both your time (you're creating one thing, not five) and each platform's native format. And AI tools make the adaptation step dramatically faster—you can feed in your original piece and get platform-specific drafts in minutes. (More on this in the AI section below.)

What to Create

Content for a micro-business should do one of three things: answer a question your customers are actually asking, share a perspective or insight that positions you as someone worth listening to, or tell a story that makes your business feel real and human.

Answer real questions

This is the workhorse of content marketing, and it's where search still matters. What do your customers Google before they find you? What questions do they ask in your consultations, your DMs, your customer support emails? Every one of those questions is a potential piece of content.

A bookkeeper might write "What to do when you're three months behind on your books." A web designer might create "5 things to check on your website before you spend money on ads." A yoga instructor might record "The best 10-minute stretch for people who sit all day."

This content serves double duty: it helps people who find it through search, and it demonstrates your expertise to anyone evaluating whether to hire you. It's not about becoming a publisher. It's about being genuinely helpful in public.

Share your perspective

This is what differentiates your content from the hundreds of other answers to the same question. Your take on what's changing in your industry, what most people get wrong, what you'd tell a friend. Perspective content doesn't rank on Google as well—but it builds loyalty, attracts the right people, and gives your audience a reason to follow you instead of anyone else.

Tell real stories

Customer stories, behind-the-scenes looks, lessons from your own mistakes, how you actually do your work. Stories humanize your business in a way that tips and advice can't. They're also the content most likely to be shared, because stories are inherently more interesting than information.

The State of Search

Google is still the largest referral source for most websites, but the relationship between content and search traffic has changed significantly.

AI overviews now answer many informational queries directly in the search results. If someone searches "how to set up email marketing," Google may summarize the answer without sending them to any website. This has reduced click-through rates for informational content across the board.

What still works: Specific, experience-based content that AI can't easily replicate. Generic "how to" articles are increasingly commoditized, but content grounded in personal experience, specific results, or original thinking still earns clicks and trust. "How to set up email marketing" might get answered by AI. "What I learned sending 200 emails to my list of 47 people" will not.

Long-tail queries matter more. Broad, competitive keywords are harder than ever to rank for. But specific, niche queries—the ones your exact customers would search for—are still achievable. Instead of trying to rank for “bookkeeping tips,” aim for “how to organize receipts when you’re a freelancer who hasn’t filed in two years.”

Local search is underrated. If your business serves a geographic area, Google Maps and local search are still goldmines. A complete Google Business Profile, consistent reviews, and local content can drive steady traffic that no algorithm change can take away.

Social Media Without Losing Your Mind

The biggest mistake micro-business owners make on social media is trying to be everywhere. You don't need a presence on every platform. You need a meaningful presence on one or two—the ones where your people (from Chapter 2) actually spend time.

Pick one primary platform. Where are your ten people? If they’re professionals, it’s probably LinkedIn. If they’re visual or local, maybe Instagram. If they’re in a specific niche, maybe a Facebook group or Reddit community. Go where they already are.

Post consistently, not constantly. Three to four posts a week on one platform beats daily posting across five platforms. Consistency builds recognition. Inconsistency makes you invisible.

Engage more than you broadcast. The algorithm on every platform rewards engagement—comments, replies, shares. Spending 20 minutes a day engaging with other people's content in your space is often more effective than spending that time creating your own posts.

Consider short-form video—even imperfect video. Short-form video (under 60 seconds) is the dominant discovery format on most platforms right now. You don't need a production studio. A phone, decent lighting, and one useful insight is enough. The bar for quality is lower than you think—authenticity matters more than polish. If video feels intimidating, start with a single 30-second tip related to one of your blog posts. You can always get more polished later.

Don't chase virality. Viral content almost never converts to customers. A million views from people who'd never buy from you is vanity, not marketing. It attracts random attention, inflates your follower count, and vanishes. Steady, relevant content that reaches the right 500 people is infinitely more valuable than a viral post that reaches 500,000 strangers.

Your Content Rhythm

Here's a sustainable pace for a solo operator who has a business to run:

One substantial piece per week or two. A blog post, a video, a podcast episode, a detailed social post. This is your "create once" piece. Aim for useful and specific over long and comprehensive.

Three to four social posts per week. A mix of adapted content from your main piece, quick observations or insights, and engagement with your community. This takes 30–45 minutes a day if you batch it.

One email per week. Your main content piece, repurposed or adapted. Your email list hears your best stuff first (or at least simultaneously). Never make your email an afterthought.

That's it. One main piece, a handful of social posts, one email. If this still feels like a lot, start with just the email and one social platform. You can always add more later. The important thing is to start with a rhythm you can sustain for months, not a burst you'll abandon in three weeks.

AI and Content

Content repurposing is where AI saves you the most time. Feed in a blog post and ask for five social captions, a newsletter draft, and a video script outline. What used to be an afternoon of adaptation work becomes ten minutes of editing.

AI is also useful for generating outlines when you're stuck and brainstorming content ideas based on your audience and niche. Where it gets risky: publishing AI-generated content with minimal editing. Audiences can increasingly detect it, and more importantly, it tends to be generic. If your content could have been written by anyone — or anything — it won't build the personal connection that makes your marketing work. Use AI for the production; keep the thinking and the voice yours.

The AI Prompt Library companion resource includes specific prompts for content repurposing, outline generation, and platform adaptation.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

Step 1: Choose one platform where your people already spend time. That's your primary platform for the next 90 days.

Step 2: Make a list of ten questions your customers actually ask. These are your first ten content ideas.

Step 3: Create one piece of content this week from that list. Publish it. Then adapt it into a social post and an email.

Step 4: Set your rhythm. Block the time in your calendar—content creation time and distribution time, separately. If it's not on the calendar, it won't happen.

Content is how people find you. Email (Chapter 4) is how you keep them. Together, they form the backbone of your marketing—and neither one costs more than your time. But there are moments when spending a little money can accelerate results. Let's talk about when and how.

CHAPTER 6

06

Paid on a Micro-Budget

When to spend money, where to spend it, and how to tell if it's working—on \$5–20 a day.

• • •

Most marketing guides treat paid advertising like it's mandatory. It's not. Plenty of micro-businesses grow entirely through organic content, email, referrals, and partnerships. If you're one of them, skip this chapter.

But there are situations where spending a small amount of money on ads makes sense—and when done right, even \$5–20 a day can produce measurable results. The key word is *measurable*. If you're spending money on advertising and can't tell whether it's working, you're not advertising. You're donating.

When Paid Ads Make Sense

Paid advertising is worth considering when you meet three conditions simultaneously:

You have a clear offer. An ad needs to point somewhere—a product page, a landing page, an opt-in offer. If someone clicks and the destination is confusing or the offer is vague, you've wasted the click. Get your message right (Chapter 3) and your online presence solid (Chapter 8) before spending money to send people there.

You know who you're targeting. Paid platforms are powerful because they let you show ads to specific people. But that only works if you know who those people are. Your Chapter 2 exercise—understanding where your people spend time, what they care about, what they're searching for—directly informs your ad targeting.

You can measure the result. At minimum, you need to know how many people clicked, how many took the desired action (bought, signed up, booked), and what that cost you per action. If you can't track this, don't spend money until you can.

Where to Spend It

For micro-budgets, two categories of ads are worth considering. Everything else is either too expensive, too complex, or too hard to measure at small scale.

Search ads (Google, Bing)

Search ads appear when someone actively searches for what you offer. This is "high-intent" traffic—they're already looking. That's the great advantage: you're not interrupting someone; you're meeting them where they already are.

The challenge is cost. Popular keywords can cost \$5–50+ per click. For a micro-business, the math only works when your product or service has a high enough value to justify the acquisition cost. A bookkeeper charging \$300/month can absorb a \$30 cost-per-click because one client pays for the ad spend many times over. A \$15 digital product usually can't.

Start with: Very specific, long-tail keywords (not "bookkeeper" but "freelance bookkeeper for small business in Portland"). Set a daily budget of \$5–10. Run it for a week, measure results, adjust.

Social ads (Meta, LinkedIn, and others)

Social ads—primarily on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn—let you target people based on interests, behaviors, and demographics rather than search intent.

They're better for awareness, list-building, and lower-priced offers.

The cost is generally lower per impression than search, but the intent is also lower. These people weren't looking for you—your ad appeared in their feed. That means your creative (the image, video, and copy) has to work much harder to earn attention.

Start with: A campaign to grow your email list using your opt-in offer from Chapter 4. Target a narrow audience that matches your Chapter 2 profile. Budget \$5–15/day. This is often the highest-ROI first ad campaign because every new subscriber has long-term value.

One more tactic worth knowing: retargeting

Retargeting shows ads specifically to people who have already visited your website. It's often the highest-ROI ad tactic for micro-businesses because you're only spending money on people who already showed interest. Someone visited your pricing page but didn't buy? A retargeting ad reminding them of your offer can bring them back. Most social ad platforms make this easy to set up with a small piece of tracking code on your site. Even at \$3–5/day, retargeting can outperform cold audience campaigns by a wide margin.

The One-Week Test

Before committing any real budget, run a one-week test. Here's the framework:

Day 1–2: Set up one campaign on one platform. One ad, one audience, one offer. Keep it simple.

Day 3–5: Let it run. Don't touch it. Resist the urge to optimize on two days of data.

Day 6–7: Review. How many clicks? How many conversions? What was the cost per conversion?

Now do the math. If you're spending \$10/day and getting one email subscriber per day at \$10 per subscriber, is that worth it? Depends on what a subscriber is worth to you over time. If 5% of subscribers eventually buy a \$100 product, each subscriber is worth \$5 on average—and you're overpaying. If they buy a \$500 service, each subscriber is worth \$25, and you're getting a bargain.

Here's the service business version: a personal trainer spends \$15/day on Instagram ads promoting a free "5-Day Desk Stretch Challenge." After a week, she's spent \$105 and gained 35 email subscribers (\$3 each). Over the next two months, three of those subscribers book her \$200/month online coaching program. That's \$600/month in recurring revenue from \$105 in ad spend. The math works—but only because the funnel (free challenge → email nurture → paid offer) is in place before the ads start running.

This is back-of-envelope math, but it's more analysis than most micro-businesses ever do with their ad spend. The Budget Calculator companion tool is designed for exactly this—helping you see whether your spend makes sense at the numbers you're actually seeing.

When to Stop

Knowing when to *stop* spending is just as important as knowing when to start. Pull the plug on a campaign if:

Your cost per conversion is above your target after a full week. Not after two days—after a full week of data. Short runs produce unreliable numbers.

You're spending more time managing ads than the return justifies. If you're spending five hours a week tweaking a \$50/week campaign, your time is being spent, not just your money.

You don't have a clear path from ad click to revenue. If someone clicks your ad and your funnel (landing page → email list → eventual sale) isn't working, more ad spend won't fix it. Fix the funnel first.

Your audience is seeing the same ad too often. Most platforms show a "frequency" metric—how many times, on average, each person has seen your ad. Once this crosses 3–4, performance typically drops and annoyance rises. Time for fresh creative or a pause.

There's no shame in deciding that paid ads don't work for your business. Many successful micro-businesses never run a single ad. Paid is one tool in the toolbox, not a requirement.

AI and Paid Ads

Give an AI tool your offer, target audience, and core message, then ask for ten headline options and five body copy variants. Test the best ones against each other. Most paid platforms also have their own AI features built in now — auto-generated copy, audience expansion suggestions, creative recommendations. These are fine as starting points. Just review them against what you know about your specific customers before letting them run.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

If you've never run paid ads: Don't start here. Make sure your email sequence is set up (Chapter 4), your message is clear (Chapter 3), and your landing page works (Chapter 8). Then consider a one-week test with \$5–10/day.

If you're currently running ads: Review your cost per conversion. Is it sustainable? If you can't answer that question, your tracking isn't set up properly—fix that before spending another dollar.

If you've tried ads and they didn't work: Before assuming ads don't work for your business, check whether the problem was the ad or what happened after the click. A great ad sending traffic to a confusing landing page is a landing page problem, not an ad problem.

Paid ads can accelerate results, but the most durable marketing channels for micro-businesses don't cost money—they cost relationships. Let's talk about the most underused one.

CHAPTER 7

07 *Partnerships & Word of Mouth*

The channels no algorithm can take away.

• • •

If there's a single most underused marketing channel for micro-businesses, it's this one. Not social media (everyone's there). Not email (most people at least know they should be doing it). Partnerships—referrals, collaborations, affiliate-style arrangements, and community—are where the biggest opportunities sit, largely untouched.

The reason is simple: partnerships require a different kind of effort. They're not something you can set up from your laptop in an afternoon. They require reaching out to real people, building genuine relationships, and creating arrangements where both sides win. That's harder than writing a social post. It's also dramatically more effective.

Why Partnerships Work So Well

When someone you trust recommends a product or service, you're five to ten times more likely to buy than if you encountered it through an ad. That's not a marketing stat pulled from thin air—it's basic human psychology. We take shortcuts by trusting the judgment of people we already trust.

For a micro-business, this effect is amplified. You don't have brand recognition. You don't have a massive ad budget to build familiarity. What you *can* have is a network of people who genuinely recommend you to their audiences, their clients, and their communities. Each recommendation carries the trust of the recommender—which is worth more than any ad you could ever run.

The \$100 Startup described this as “strategic giving”—being so helpful and generous that people naturally want to tell others about you. That principle still applies.

Here’s what it looks like in practice: a freelance copywriter noticed that three of her best clients came from the same business coach’s recommendation. She reached out to the coach, offered to write a guest post for his newsletter on “what to say on your homepage,” and included a link to her services. That single post brought in five new clients over three months—more than any social media campaign she’d ever run. The coach looked good for sharing useful content. She got clients. Both audiences benefited. That’s a partnership.

There are also structured approaches that make word-of-mouth less random and more reliable.

Four Types of Partnerships

1. Referral partnerships

The simplest form: find people who serve the same audience but don't compete with you, and agree to refer clients to each other. A web designer and a copywriter. A bookkeeper and a business coach. A personal trainer and a nutritionist. The overlap in audience is obvious, and the referral is natural because each person is solving a different part of the same problem.

You don’t need a formal contract. Start with a conversation: “I keep getting asked about [thing you don’t do]. Can I send those people your way? And if you ever have clients who need [what you do], I’d love to help.” That’s it.

2. Content collaborations

Guest posts, podcast appearances, co-hosted webinars, joint social media content. You create something together, both share it with your audiences, and both benefit from the exposure. This is the fastest way to grow your email list (as mentioned in Chapter 4) because you’re borrowing trust from someone else’s audience.

Before you collaborate, agree on three things upfront: who creates what, when and where each person will share it, and how you'll handle the audience that comes through (will you add them to a shared resource, or each handle your own leads?). This prevents the awkward situation where one person promotes heavily and the other forgets. A quick email or message confirming the plan is enough—no formal contract needed.

The key is relevance. Don't partner with anyone who has an audience, partner with people whose audience overlaps with yours. A podcast interview to 500 of the right listeners is worth more than one to 50,000 random ones.

3. Affiliate or commission arrangements

If your business sells a product (digital or physical), you can create a simple affiliate arrangement: partners who refer buyers get a percentage of the sale. This turns every collaborator into a motivated promoter.

Keep it simple. A 20–30% commission on digital products or 10–15% on physical ones is standard. Use a basic tracking link (most e-commerce and course platforms have this built in). The formality of the arrangement can scale with the relationship—start informal and add structure as it grows.

4. Community participation

This is the long game, and it's powerful. Become a genuinely helpful, visible member of the communities where your customers already gather. Not by promoting yourself—by contributing. Answer questions. Share resources. Help people. Over time, you become the person everyone knows and recommends when someone needs what you offer.

This works in online communities (Facebook groups, Slack channels, forums, Discord servers) and offline ones (local business groups, industry meetups, conferences). The principle is the same: be consistently useful, and the marketing takes care of itself.

A critical note: communities can smell self-promotion from a mile away. If every comment you leave subtly redirects to your business, you'll get ignored or banned. The ratio matters—aim for ten genuinely helpful contributions for every one that mentions what you do. When people see you being consistently useful, they'll check out your profile on their own. You don't need to push.

The Referral Ask

Most micro-business owners wait passively for referrals. This is a mistake. Asking for referrals—directly, specifically, and at the right time—dramatically increases the number you get.

The right time is right after a positive interaction: a successful project completion, a great review, a moment where the customer has explicitly expressed satisfaction. Not three months later in a random email.

The right ask is specific: not “Know anyone who might need my help?” but “Know anyone who [specific situation where your product helps]?” The Marketing Mad Libs companion tool includes a fill-in-the-blank referral script designed for exactly this.

AI and Partnerships

AI is useful for two things here: identifying potential partners (describe your business and ask for a list of complementary businesses in your space) and drafting outreach messages that don't sound like cold pitches. The relationship itself, though — that's on you.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

Step 1: List five businesses that serve your audience but don't compete with you. These are your top referral partner candidates.

Step 2: Write the first line of your outreach message to that person right now. Just the opener: "Hey [Name], I've been following your work on [specific thing you genuinely admire]..." You can finish the rest tonight. The hardest part is the first sentence.

Step 3: Draft a referral ask for one happy customer. Something like: "Hey [name], I'm looking for more clients like you — people who [one thing that makes them great]. Know anyone who [specific situation]? I'd love an intro." Fill in the blanks with real details, then send it tonight.

Partnerships bring people to your door. But what happens when they arrive? Let's make sure your online presence is ready for them.

CHAPTER 8

08

Your Online Presence

Not a web design chapter. A “does your site actually convert?” chapter.

• • •

This is not about making your website pretty. This is about making sure that when someone arrives—from a Google search, a social media link, a referral, or an ad—they understand what you do, trust you enough to take the next step, and can actually *find* the next step.

Most micro-business websites fail at conversion not because they're ugly, but because they're confusing. The message is vague, the call to action is buried, and the design communicates “I made this on a weekend” rather than “This person is good at what they do.”

The good news: you don't need a redesign. You need a tune-up. Here are the specific things that matter.

The Five-Second Test

Pull up your website. Look at it for five seconds, then look away. Can you answer these three questions from memory?

1. What does this business do? If the answer requires scrolling past the first screen, your headline isn't working. This is where your one sentence from Chapter 3 lives.

2. Who is it for? The visitor should immediately feel like this is (or isn't) for them. Specificity helps here—“for freelancers” is clearer than “for professionals.”

3. What should I do next? There should be one obvious next step on every page—sign up, book a call, buy, learn more. Not four. One. The primary call to action should be impossible to miss.

If your site doesn't pass this test, fix those three things before anything else. They matter more than fonts, colors, photos, or any other design element.

What Your Website Actually Needs

For most micro-businesses, a website needs five things and nothing else:

A clear headline. Your one-sentence message, front and center. What you do, who it's for, why it matters.

Social proof. Testimonials, customer logos, results, reviews—anything that shows you've done this before and people were happy. Even two or three testimonials are better than zero. The best testimonials are specific, not generic—"Sarah helped me rewrite my homepage and my inquiries doubled in two weeks" beats "Great service!" every time. If you can include the person's name, business, and a concrete result, that testimonial works five times harder than a vague endorsement. Ask satisfied customers for permission to quote them, and prompt them with: "What specific result did you get?" If you're brand new, use results from your own experience or beta customers.

A clear offer. What you're selling, what it costs, what the buyer gets. Don't make people hunt for this information. The biggest conversion killer for small business websites is hiding the price or making the offer unclear.

A primary call to action. One thing you want visitors to do. Buy, sign up, book a call, start a free trial. Make it a button. Make it obvious. Put it above the fold and again at the bottom of the page.

And consider what to remove. Many small business websites are cluttered with pages and elements that add confusion, not clarity. If you have a blog with two posts from 2022, delete it or commit to updating it. If you have a "Services" page with twelve offerings, cut it to your top three. If your homepage has a slider with five rotating banners, replace it with one clear headline. Subtraction is often more powerful than addition when it comes to conversion.

An about page that builds trust. Who you are, why you do this, and enough personal detail that visitors feel like they're buying from a person, not a faceless entity. Photos help. Your story helps. Credentials or experience help, but only if they're relevant to the customer's problem.

Your Social Profiles

Your website is your home base, but your social profiles are often where people encounter you first. Apply the same five-second test: does your bio clearly say what you do, who it's for, and what to do next?

The social bio formula from Chapter 3 works here: [What you do] for [who you serve]. [One proof point]. [Call to action]. Keep it tight. Every word earns its place.

Make sure your profiles link back to your website or a specific landing page—not just your homepage, but the page most relevant to the audience on that platform. Your Instagram link might go to a free guide. Your LinkedIn link might go to a booking page.

Speed Kills (Slowly)

If your website takes more than three seconds to load, roughly half your visitors leave before they see anything. The most common culprits for slow sites: oversized images (compress them), too many plugins or widgets (remove the ones you don't need), and cheap hosting. Test your site speed with any free speed-testing tool—if you're over three seconds, it's worth fixing before you spend time driving more traffic to a site that's losing visitors at the door.

Mobile Matters More Than You Think

More than half of all web traffic is mobile. If your website looks bad on a phone—if text is tiny, buttons are hard to tap, or the layout breaks—you're losing visitors before they even read your headline. Pull up your site on your phone right now. If anything is hard to read, tap, or navigate, fix it. This is table stakes.

AI and Your Online Presence

Try this: paste your homepage copy into an AI tool and ask, "Can you tell what this business does, who it's for, and what I should do next?" If the AI struggles to answer, your visitors are struggling too. It's a surprisingly effective way to spot vagueness you've gone blind to.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

Step 1: Run the five-second test on your own website. Ask two friends to do the same. If any of the three questions can't be answered, fix those first.

Step 2: Check your site on mobile. Fix anything that's broken or hard to use.

Step 3: Update your social bios to match your one-sentence message. Make sure every profile links to the right destination.

Your presence is ready. Your channels are in place. Now let's make sure you're measuring what matters—and only what matters.

ACT III

03

THE SYSTEM

How to build a simple system that compounds over time —
not just a list of tactics.

CHAPTER 9

09 *Measure What Matters*

Five numbers to track. No more.

• • •

There are two kinds of micro-business owners when it comes to marketing metrics. The first kind tracks nothing. They have a vague sense that “things are going okay” or “it’s been slow lately” but couldn’t tell you their conversion rate if you paid them. The second kind tracks everything. They have dashboards with seventeen metrics, most of which they don’t understand, and they spend so much time analyzing data that they never act on it.

Both approaches are broken. You need to track a small number of metrics, understand what each one means, and use them to make decisions. That’s it. Five numbers.

The Five Numbers

1. Traffic (or reach)

How many people are encountering your business? This might be website visitors, social media reach, email opens, or some combination. The specific metric depends on where your marketing lives. What matters is the trend: is it going up, flat, or declining?

Traffic is a leading indicator. If nobody’s seeing your stuff, nothing else can work. But traffic alone is meaningless—a million visitors who don’t buy are worth less than ten who do.

2. Email list growth (net new subscribers)

How many people joined your list this month, minus how many unsubscribed or were removed? This is the single best measure of whether your marketing is building an asset or just creating noise. A growing list means your message is resonating and your content is attracting the right people.

3. Conversion rate

Of the people who encounter your offer, what percentage take the desired action? This might be purchases, bookings, sign-ups, or inquiries—whatever the primary action is for your business. Even rough conversion tracking is better than none.

A typical benchmark: 1–3% of website visitors taking action is normal for most small businesses. If you're below 1%, your offer or your messaging likely needs work. If you're above 3%, you're doing something right—figure out what and do more of it.

4. Cost per customer (or cost per lead)

What does it cost you to acquire a new customer? Include everything: ad spend, tool costs, and an honest estimate of your time. This number tells you whether your marketing is sustainable. If you're spending \$50 to acquire a customer who pays you \$30, you have a math problem, not a marketing problem.

The Budget Calculator companion tool tracks this automatically month over month.

5. Revenue from marketing

How much revenue can you trace back to your marketing efforts? For some businesses this is straightforward (an online sale from an email link). For others, it requires some estimation (a client who found you through a blog post but didn't buy for three months). Even rough attribution is useful.

The simplest attribution method that actually works: when a new customer buys or inquires, ask “How did you hear about us?” Track the answers in a spreadsheet. It's imperfect—people forget, they cite the last touchpoint rather than the first—but over time, patterns emerge clearly enough to guide decisions. Some businesses add a “How did you find us?” dropdown to their checkout or booking form, which automates this entirely.

The goal is to know whether your marketing is generating a positive return or just keeping you busy.

How to Track Without Becoming a Data Analyst

You don't need fancy analytics software. Here's the minimum viable setup:

Website traffic: Whatever analytics your website platform provides. Most website builders include basic analytics. If you want more detail, a simple analytics tool will do—don't overthink it.

Email metrics: Your email platform tracks subscribers, open rates, and click rates automatically.

Conversions and revenue: This might live in your e-commerce platform, your booking tool, or a simple spreadsheet. The Weekly Marketing Tracker companion tool is designed for this—a single place to log your five numbers each week.

Set a calendar reminder: every Monday morning (or whatever day starts your week), spend 15 minutes logging your numbers. That's it. Fifteen minutes a week of tracking is enough to make informed decisions. Once a month, spend an additional 30 minutes looking at the trends: are your numbers moving in the right direction over the past four weeks? And once a quarter, do a deeper review—pull back, look at the full picture, and ask whether your channel mix still makes sense or whether it's time to shift resources. You're not trying to build a data warehouse. You're trying to answer one question: *is this working?*

When to Change Course

Numbers don't just tell you how you're doing. They tell you what to fix.

Traffic is low but conversion is high: Your offer is working, but not enough people are seeing it. Focus on content, partnerships, and possibly paid ads to increase reach.

Traffic is high but conversion is low: People are finding you, but something isn't clicking. Revisit your message (Chapter 3), your offer, or your landing page (Chapter 8).

Email list is shrinking: People are leaving faster than they're joining. Check your email content (is it useful?) and your sending frequency (too much or too little?).

Cost per customer is too high: Either find cheaper channels (organic, referrals) or increase the value of each customer (upsells, retention, lifetime value).

Everything is flat—no growth, no decline: This is actually the most common scenario and the sneakiest, because it feels fine. You're not losing ground, so there's no urgency. But flat is not sustainable for a growing business. If everything has been flat for four to six weeks, it usually means your current approach has hit its ceiling and you need to add a new channel, try a different content format, or invest in partnerships to break through. Flat is a signal to experiment, not to coast.

The pattern: metrics point you toward the problem, and the earlier chapters in this guide contain the solutions. The numbers are the diagnostic. The chapters are the treatment.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

Step 1: Set up tracking for the five numbers. Even if it's just a spreadsheet with five columns, start this week.

Step 2: Log your numbers for the first time. Establish your baseline.

Step 3: Set a weekly reminder to update your numbers. Fifteen minutes, every week.

You know what to track. Now let's build the weekly habit that makes all of this sustainable.

CHAPTER 10

10

Your Weekly Marketing Rhythm

An hour on Tuesday beats an existential crisis every morning.

• • •

Marketing fails for micro-business owners not because they don't know what to do, but because they don't do it consistently. They have a burst of motivation, post on social media every day for two weeks, send three emails, run an ad—and then real life intervenes. The client project gets intense. The kids get sick. The motivation fades. And marketing goes dark for six weeks until the next panic.

The fix isn't more motivation. It's a routine. A small, sustainable, repeatable rhythm that turns marketing from an overwhelming project into a manageable habit. Here's what that looks like.

The Weekly Marketing Hour

Block one hour per week on your calendar. Treat it like a client meeting—it doesn't get moved. This is your marketing hour. In that hour, you do three things:

15 minutes: Review your numbers. Pull up your five metrics from Chapter 9. What happened last week? Any notable changes? Log them in your tracker. This keeps you grounded in reality instead of guessing.

30 minutes: Create and distribute one piece of content. Write an email to your list. Draft a social post. Record a short video. Adapt last week's content for a new platform. This is the engine that keeps your marketing visible. One piece per week, distributed to your channels. If 30 minutes sounds tight for creating an email from scratch—it is. Two strategies: batch your content creation (write two or three emails in a dedicated 90-minute session every few weeks), or use an AI tool to draft from your notes and then spend the 30 minutes editing. Either way, the goal is progress, not perfection.

15 minutes: Build one relationship. Send one outreach email to a potential partner. Follow up on a referral request. Engage meaningfully with someone in a community where your audience hangs out. Comment on a potential collaborator's post. This is the relationship work from Chapter 7, in micro-doses.

That's it. One hour, three activities, every week. It's not glamorous. It won't produce viral content or overnight results. But it compounds. After three months of consistent weekly marketing, you'll have sent 12+ emails, published 12+ pieces of content, and initiated 12+ relationship-building contacts. That's more marketing than most micro-businesses do in a year.

Your Very First Marketing Hour

If you're starting from scratch—no list, no sequences, no content—your first few marketing hours will look different from the steady-state rhythm above. Week 1: set up your email platform, create an opt-in offer, and add it to your website. Week 2: write and schedule your first welcome email and your first broadcast email. Week 3: begin the 15/30/15 rhythm with whatever you have. Don't wait until everything is perfect to start the routine. Start the routine and build as you go.

The Optional Second Hour

If you can spare two hours a week, the second hour goes toward bigger projects—things that have outsized impact but don't fit into a weekly cadence:

Building your email sequences (Chapter 4). Welcome sequence, sales sequence, re-engagement sequence. These are one-time builds that pay dividends forever.

Creating a substantial content piece (Chapter 5). A detailed guide, a video tutorial, a case study. The kind of content that drives traffic for months.

Setting up or optimizing paid campaigns (Chapter 6). The one-week test, performance review, creative updates.

Updating your website (Chapter 8). Improving your headline, adding testimonials, fixing mobile issues.

Rotate through these as needed. Not all at once—one per week, based on what your metrics tell you needs attention.

When You're Too Busy

You will have weeks when even one hour feels impossible. Here's the absolute minimum—the “break glass in case of emergency” version:

10 minutes: Send one email to your list. It can be short—a quick tip, a behind-the-scenes thought, a useful link. Maintaining the relationship with your list is the single highest-leverage marketing activity you can do.

If you can't do even that, forgive yourself and pick up the rhythm next week. Marketing is a long game, and missing a week isn't fatal. Missing six months is. Here's the uncomfortable truth: the businesses that market consistently through the busy seasons are the ones that don't have slow seasons. Marketing during a busy month feels unnecessary. But the clients you attract this month are the revenue you collect next month and the month after. The businesses that stop marketing when they're busy create their own feast-or-famine cycle—then blame the market.

AI and Your Routine

AI compresses the 30-minute content block significantly. An email that takes 30 minutes from scratch becomes 10 minutes of drafting-with-AI plus editing. Social posts that would take 20 minutes become 5-minute adaptations. The AI Prompt Library companion resource is organized around this weekly rhythm — prompts for each of the three activities, designed to be used in sequence.

The 15-minute relationship block should stay human. Real engagement, real outreach, real conversations.

END OF CHAPTER *Do This Now*

Step 1: Block one hour on your calendar for next week. Choose a day and time that you'll actually protect.

Step 2: Set up the Weekly Marketing Tracker (companion tool) or create your own simple tracking system.

Step 3: This week, do the minimum: send one email to your list. Just one. That's the start of your rhythm.

You have the strategy, the channels, the metrics, and the routine. One more thing: a plan to tie it all together.

CHAPTER 11

11

Put It Together: Your 90-Day Plan

The one-page marketing plan and a phased roadmap to make it real.

• • •

You've done the thinking. You know who your people are (Chapter 2), what to say to them (Chapter 3), which channels to focus on (Chapters 4–8), what to measure (Chapter 9), and how to sustain it (Chapter 10). Now let's put it on a single page and build a 90-day roadmap so it actually gets done.

Your One-Page Marketing Plan

Fill this in. Write it out by hand or type it up. Put it somewhere you'll see it. This is the document you'll reference every week during your marketing hour.

YOUR ONE-PAGE MARKETING PLAN

My message:	<i>[Your one sentence from Chapter 3]</i>
My audience:	<i>[Your behavioral description from Chapter 2]</i>
My primary channel:	<i>[The one channel where your people are most reachable]</i>
My secondary channel:	<i>[Your backup channel]</i>
My email strategy:	<i>[Cadence, opt-in offer, sequences in place?]</i>
My content approach:	<i>[What type, how often, where distributed]</i>
My partnership plan:	<i>[Top 3–5 potential partners, referral strategy]</i>
My budget:	<i>[Monthly amount, allocated across which channels]</i>
My five numbers:	<i>[Which specific metrics you're tracking]</i>
My weekly rhythm:	<i>[Day, time, three activities]</i>

Here's what a filled-in version might look like for a freelance bookkeeper:

EXAMPLE: FREELANCE BOOKKEEPER

My message: *"I help freelancers stop dreading tax season—without learning accounting software."*

My audience: *Creative freelancers in years 1–3 who earn \$50K–\$150K, find information through peer recommendations, and hang out in freelance-focused online communities.*

My primary channel: *Email list (weekly newsletter with one tax/money tip).*

My secondary channel: *LinkedIn (3 posts/week, engage in freelance groups).*

My email strategy: *Weekly on Tuesdays. Opt-in: "The Freelancer's Tax Season Survival Checklist." Welcome sequence: 4 emails.*

My content approach: *One blog post every two weeks answering real client questions. Repurpose to LinkedIn + email.*

My partnership plan: *Partner with 3 freelance coaches and 2 web designers. Ask 5 clients for referrals this quarter.*

My budget: *\$150/month—\$100 email tool, \$50 boosted LinkedIn posts.*

My five numbers: *Website visits, net new subscribers, consultation bookings (conversion), cost per client, monthly revenue from new clients.*

My weekly rhythm: *Tuesday 9–10 AM. 15 min review, 30 min email + social, 15 min one outreach.*

That's the plan. One page. Not a 20-page marketing strategy document that no one will ever reread. One page that captures every decision you've made throughout this guide.

The Marketing Plan Builder, a companion web-based tool, walks you through these fields interactively and generates a formatted version you can print or save. But a notebook works too.

The 90-Day Roadmap

Ninety days is the right timeframe for a first marketing push. Long enough to see results, short enough to stay focused. Here's how to phase it:

Weeks 1–4: Build the Foundation

Goal: Get the basics in place so everything else has somewhere to land.

Set up or fix your email system: opt-in offer, welcome sequence, weekly cadence. Update your website: headline, call to action, mobile check. Write your one-page marketing plan. Begin your weekly marketing rhythm. Start tracking your five numbers.

Milestone: By end of week 4, you have a working email funnel, a clear website, and four weeks of metrics logged. *(Most useful companion tools for this phase: Budget Calculator, Marketing Mad Libs, Marketing Plan Builder.)*

Weeks 5–8: Build Momentum

Goal: Start creating content and building relationships.

Publish content consistently on your primary platform. Send weekly emails. Reach out to at least four potential partners. Ask your happiest customers for referrals. If your budget allows, consider a one-week paid ad test.

Milestone: By end of week 8, you have a growing email list, regular content output, and at least two active partnership conversations. *(Most useful companion tools: AI Prompt Library, Swipe File.)*

Weeks 9–12: Optimize and Double Down

Goal: Look at what's working and invest more there.

Review your numbers across the full 90 days. Which channel drove the most email subscribers? Which content got the most engagement? Which partnerships generated referrals? Double down on what's working. Cut or reduce what isn't. Set up any remaining automated sequences. Refine your message based on what you've learned.

Milestone: By end of week 12, you have a sustainable marketing system that runs on your weekly rhythm, fed by the channels that have proven to work for *your* specific business. (*Most useful companion tools: Weekly Marketing Tracker, Budget Calculator for ROI review.*)

After 90 Days

At the end of your first 90 days, you'll have something most micro-businesses never achieve: a working system. Not perfect—working. You'll know your numbers, have a growing list, understand which channels earn your time, and have a routine that keeps it all running.

From there, it's iteration. Test a new channel. Deepen your best partnerships. Try a different content format. Improve your conversion rate. Each 90-day cycle gets more refined because you're building on real data, not guesswork.

Your Companion Tools

Each has been referenced where relevant throughout the guide. Here they are in one place: Marketing Budget Calculator, Weekly Marketing Tracker, Marketing Mad Libs, AI Marketing Prompt Library, Swipe File of Real Examples, Marketing Plan Builder, and Audio Companion.

Use what's useful. Ignore what isn't.

• • •

The best marketing you'll ever do is build something genuinely worth talking about — a product that solves a real problem, a service that delights, a business that treats people like humans. The second best is making it easy for satisfied customers to spread the word.

This guide gave you the system. The companion tools gave you the shortcuts. The weekly rhythm gave you the habit.

Now go do the thing. And then tell people about it.