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PERSONAL BRANDING SERIES • VOLUME 10

Turning Your Knowledge Into Income

Check for real demand, design a paid offer and understand the numbers behind selling what you know.

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A note before you dig in

I started my first business in 2007, and I had to figure out on my own how to get customers through the door. One of the earliest lessons was this: knowing a lot about something and getting paid for it are two very different things.

Expertise is the starting point, not the business. Somebody has to need it, be willing to pay for it and be able to find you. And then the numbers have to actually work after fees, supplies and your time.

This guide walks you through that whole picture, from finding a problem worth solving to running a small paid test before you put real money on the line.

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YOU'LL WALK AWAY WITH

- A clear definition of a marketable problem
- A comparison of offer types and which fits your life
- A price built on real costs, including your time
- A small pilot to test demand before you invest big
- A simple sales process you can repeat and measure

WHAT'S INSIDE

01 Find a problem people will pay to solve

02 Choose an offer and how you'll deliver it

03 Price so it actually works

04 Test before you invest

05 Build a sales process you can repeat

Time: 60 to 90 minutes, then a month of small steps

Best for: working professionals, business owners, career changers and anyone figuring out what is next

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read a lesson, look at the example, then answer the questions in your own words. Pencil is fine. Messy is fine. Treat your first answers like a rough draft and check them against real conversations and real evidence before you put serious time or money behind them. Then come back to the 30 day plan and actually do it. That part is where the change happens.

LESSON 01

Find a problem people will pay to solve

Expertise alone doesn't create demand.

What makes knowledge sellable

Knowledge becomes valuable in the market when it helps a specific customer accomplish something they care about. A market is a group of potential buyers who have a need, are willing to pay and can actually access what you're offering.

Start with real problems

Identify problems that keep coming up, who has them and what they do about it now. Interview potential buyers about what they've actually purchased, not what they say they might buy someday. And separate the person who benefits from the person or organization who pays.

WORTH KNOWING

Market	Buyers with a need, the willingness to pay and the ability to access your offer.
Beneficiary	The person who gets the value.
Payer	The person or organization that actually pays. Sometimes it's not the beneficiary.
Demand	Evidence that people will actually buy, not just say they're interested.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A seamstress learns that community organizations want basic sewing workshops. The people taking the class may need it to be free, but a library or a sponsor could be the one paying her. Same workshop, different customer than she expected.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Assuming that because you know it, people will pay for it
- Asking "Would you buy this?" instead of "What have you bought?"
- Pitching to people who benefit but can't pay

YOUR TURN

Describe three problems you can help solve.

For each, name who benefits, who might pay and what they use now.

What evidence of demand do you already have?

LESSON 02

Choose an offer and how you'll deliver it

Pick the model that fits your time and your money.

The main options

Services are your direct time and expertise. Digital products deliver packaged information. Group programs serve several people at once. Licensing lets others use something you created under set terms. Recurring revenue means repeated payments, and it comes with ongoing responsibilities.

Count the real work

Look at how much preparation, delivery, support and updating each model takes. A digital product may be cheap to copy, but it still needs marketing, maintenance and customer support. Choose an offer that fits the time and money you actually have.

WORTH KNOWING

Service	You deliver the work or expertise directly.
Digital product	Packaged information people buy and use on their own.
Group program	You serve several people at the same time.
Licensing	Others pay to use something you created, under defined terms.
Recurring revenue	Repeated payments for ongoing access or service.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A marketing professional runs a small paid group workshop before recording a full online course. She learns what questions people really ask and improves her material before she spends months building something bigger.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Thinking digital products are "passive" and need no upkeep
- Building the big version before testing the small one
- Choosing a model that needs more time than you have

YOUR TURN

Compare three offer types by startup cost, delivery hours, buyer access, ongoing support and risks.

Which one fits your current time and money best?

Which will you test first?

LESSON 03

Price so it actually works

Know your numbers before you set your price.

The basic math

Revenue is the money you bring in from sales. Variable costs go up as you sell more, like supplies or payment fees. Fixed costs stay about the same no matter how much you sell, within a range. Contribution per sale is price minus variable cost. Break even volume is fixed costs divided by contribution per sale, rounded up.

Count everything

Include payment processing fees, supplies, refunds, prep time, admin time and your own pay. Plan separately for taxes and for the timing of when money actually lands. Then compare your price with what customers are willing to pay and what alternatives cost.

WORTH KNOWING

Variable cost	A cost that rises with each sale.
Fixed cost	A cost that stays about the same regardless of sales.
Contribution	Price minus variable cost, per sale.
Break even	Fixed costs divided by contribution, rounded up.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A workshop charges $60 per seat. Variable cost is $10 per seat. Fixed event costs are $350, including the facilitator's planned pay. Contribution is $50 per seat, so seven seats cover those costs. Ten seats leave a $150 surplus, before taxes and any costs not included here.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Forgetting payment fees and refunds
- Leaving your own pay out of the math
- Pricing only off what competitors charge

YOUR TURN

Write down your price, variable cost, contribution, fixed cost and break even number.

What happens if only half as many people buy?

Does your price still make sense?

LESSON 04

Test before you invest

A deposit tells you more than a compliment.

What validation means

Validation is collecting evidence that your offer solves the problem and can attract paying customers. "That's a great idea" is much weaker evidence than a deposit, a signed agreement or a completed purchase.

Run a pilot

Create a small pilot with clear deliverables, a schedule, a price and refund terms. Use feedback to refine what's included and track how much effort it takes to deliver. Never take payment unless you can deliver what you promised or refund it.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A career coach offers three paid resume review sessions instead of launching a membership right away. She tracks how long each session really takes, what clients ask and whether anyone wants more. Then she decides whether to expand.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Treating compliments as proof of demand
- Taking money before you're sure you can deliver
- Skipping refund and cancellation terms

YOUR TURN

Write a pilot offer: audience, deliverable, price, capacity and what success looks like.

How will you find participants?

How will you handle cancellations and refunds?

LESSON 05

Build a sales process you can repeat

Know every step from first hello to finished work.

Map the journey

A sales process connects discovery, inquiry, evaluation, purchase, delivery and follow up. A sustainable offer needs a way to reach buyers, deliver on promises and measure how it's going.

Track the right numbers

Write down every step from inquiry to delivery. Track qualified leads, sales, conversion rate, total revenue, costs and customer results. Use clear written agreements, and check tax, licensing and consumer protection rules before you grow.

WORTH KNOWING

Qualified lead	Someone who has the need and the ability to buy.
Conversion rate	Sales divided by qualified leads.
Gross revenue	Total money from sales before costs.

EXAMPLE (fictional)

A trainer has 20 qualified inquiries, five purchases and $500 in revenue. That's a 25 percent conversion rate. Then she subtracts her real costs and compares the result with the time she spent finding and serving those customers. That tells her whether it's actually worth it.

WATCH OUT FOR

- Tracking revenue but not costs or time
- No written agreements
- Growing before checking tax and licensing requirements

YOUR TURN

Map your sales process from first contact to follow up.

Where is the biggest bottleneck?

Set a monthly revenue goal. How many sales does that take at your price? Do you have the capacity?

WORKSHEET

Pricing and break even worksheet

Run the numbers for your best case and a slower case.

Suggested rows: price per sale, variable cost per sale, contribution per sale, fixed costs, break even volume, expected sales, revenue, total costs, surplus or shortfall, hours required.

LINE ITEM	BEST CASE	SLOWER CASE	NOTES

QUICK REFERENCE

The short version

Tear this page out, screenshot it, tape it by your desk. This is the whole guide on one page.

01 Knowledge becomes income when a defined customer needs it and will pay.

02 Separate who benefits from who pays.

03 Choose an offer model that fits your real time and money.

04 Contribution is price minus variable cost. Break even is fixed costs divided by contribution.

05 Include fees, refunds and your own pay in the math.

06 A deposit or purchase is stronger evidence than a compliment.

07 Run a small pilot with clear terms before building big.

08 Track leads, conversion, revenue, costs and time.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your 30 day plan

Small, real steps. Pick the dates now so this does not turn into one more thing you meant to do.

WEEK 1

Listen

Interview potential buyers and choose one problem to solve.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

WEEK 2

Design

Design a small offer, estimate costs and calculate break even.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

WEEK 3

Pilot

Run a pilot with clear terms and collect feedback.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

WEEK 4

Decide

Review the financial results, refine delivery and decide whether to expand.

Date: _____ Done when: _____

My very first action, the date I will do it and how I will know it is done:

What support, time or resources do I need to line up?

THIRTY DAYS LATER

Look back, then keep going

Come back to this page a month from now. Compare what you planned with what actually happened. No judgment. You are collecting information, not grading yourself.

Did people actually pay, and what did that tell me?

How did my real costs and time compare to my estimates?

Will I expand, adjust or stop, and why?

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- Emily Wale Koya, Personal Branding Roadmap, monetization and bonus sections. Supplied reference.
- U.S. Small Business Administration, Plan your business.sba.gov

Examples in this guide are made up to teach a point. They are not real clients or documented results. This guide is educational and does not guarantee any professional, business or income outcome. Rules change, so double check anything legal, tax or regulatory before you act on it.