

FROM IDEA TO LAUNCH

Start a Business Workbook

Score your ideas, talk to real customers, pass a simple validation gate,
build a starter budget, and run a 30-day launch sprint.

US Letter · Free sample

My name

My business idea

Start date

Idea Scorecard

Pick your best 4 ideas and score each from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong). Use the same standard for all. Be tougher on yourself than you would on a friend.

Criterion	Idea A	Idea B	Idea C	Idea D
Idea name				
Painful problem. Do people already spend time or money to solve it?				
Reachable buyers. I know where to find 20 of them this month.				
I can deliver. I have or can quickly learn the skills.				
Money makes sense. People pay a price that leaves profit.				
Fast first sale. I could sell to someone within 30 days.				
Low start-up cost. Fits my budget without debt.				
Fits my life. Hours, values, and energy for 2 years.				
Stands out. I can explain why someone would pick me.				
Total (max 40)				

How to read your totals

Scores are a conversation starter, not a verdict. Look at the **lowest** numbers first: one 1 on a critical row (reachable buyers, money) matters more than three 5s elsewhere. If two ideas tie, pick the one you can test fastest.

My pick and why

Customer Conversation Script

15 to 20 minutes, in person, by phone, or by video. Ask permission, say it is research and not a sales call, and take notes. Aim for 8 to 10 conversations before you decide anything.

Open

"Thanks for talking with me. I am exploring a project to help [who] with [problem area]. I am not selling anything today. I would love to hear how this works for you now. Is it okay if I take a few notes?"

Understand the situation

1. Tell me about the last time you [dealt with this].
2. What were you trying to get done?
3. What happened step by step?
4. How often does this come up?

Understand the pain

1. What was the hardest part?
2. What did it cost you (time, money, stress)?
3. What happens if you do nothing?
4. Who else is affected?

Understand what they do now

1. What have you tried so far?
2. What do you use today? What do you like and not like?
3. Have you ever paid for help with this? How much?
4. What made you decide that was worth it (or not)?

Close

1. If a solution existed, what would it need to do for you to try it?
2. Who else should I talk to?
3. Can I follow up when I have something to show?
4. Thank them. Send a short thank-you the same day.

My 3 most important questions

The things I most need to learn from this person.

Before each conversation: who am I talking to and why them?

Notes from my practice run (try it on a friend first)

Which question felt awkward? Where did I start pitching?

Avoid: Leading questions ("Don't you hate how slow X is?"), pitching your solution in the first half, selling before you have heard the problem, and counting politeness as interest.