

LINK & THRIVE

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT PACK

YOUR
BLUEPRINT
FOR
MINDSET,
STRENGTH &
BUSINESS
SUCCESS

“Build your business, strengthen your mind, and grow with confidence, even if you’re starting with nothing.”

BY CHEF RENE JOHNSON

Award-Winning Entrepreneur |
Speaker | Founder of Blackberry Soul
Fine Catering & The Soul Food Stroll

Support Pack 1

My Story

Your Starting Point



Hey Boss,

I created the **Link and Thrive Business Support Pack** because I know what it feels like to start with nothing but a dream. I know what its like to propel a vision forward into fruition.

There was a time when all I had was a baby on my hip, a little bit of courage and a vision in my heart. I didn't have money. I didn't have connections. But what I did have was grit, faith, and the willingness to keep going even when life said I couldn't. I never listened to doubters. I bet on my self over and over again. Pushing through fear, self-doubt, hardship and everything that we as humans face as obstacles. It was challenging, it was brutal and it was also very rewarding.

This workbook is your first step in building not just a business, but a powerful mindset. It's for those moments when you feel stuck. When you need to remember who you are and why you started. This is your blueprint to rise.

Let's grow together.

With love and belief,

Chef Rene Johnson

Founder of Blackberry Soul and creator of the Soul Food Stroll

How to Use This Business Support Pack

This Link and Thrive Business Support Pack was designed with simplicity in mind so you can focus on what matters: building your business and strengthening your mindset and making money. This is just the first of the 6 Part Series.

HERE'S HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF IT:

- ***Take it One Section at a Time***

You can read one section per day or dive in all at once, whatever fits your flow.

- ***Print or Go Digital***

Prefer to write by hand? Print it out and grab your pen. Want to type your thoughts? Fill it in digitally on your device.

- ***Return When you Need a Reset***

Whether you're hitting a roadblock or just need to refuel your spirit, this guide is always here for you.

Pro Tip: Keep a journal or notes app nearby for deeper thoughts and ideas. You're not just building a business... you're building you.

This workbook is designed for educational and informational purposes only. The strategies, examples, and case studies included are provided to help you explore ideas and apply concepts to your own situation. They are not intended as financial advice, nor should they replace guidance from a licensed financial professional. Past results shared in this workbook are not a guarantee of future performance. Your results will depend on your own efforts, decisions, and market conditions. Always do your own research before making financial or business decisions.



Mindset Reset for Entrepreneurs

Before you write a business plan or land your first client, you must own your mindset.

Why? Because entrepreneurship is as much an inner game as it is an outer hustle. Your business will only grow as much as you do. If your thoughts are rooted in fear, doubt, or comparison, you'll unconsciously hold yourself back. But when you lead with belief, courage, and clarity you don't just move forward, you create unstoppable momentum.

Clarity and belief are the twin engines of every successful entrepreneur. Clarity forces you to get brutally honest about why you are doing this work in the first place. It's not just about the product you sell or the service you provide, it's about the mission that fuels you, the problem you feel called to solve, and the change you want to create. Without this clarity, you drift. Decisions feel harder, opportunities feel overwhelming, and it's easy to get pulled into comparison or distraction. But with it, every choice you make is anchored in purpose, and even "no" becomes a confident step in the right direction.

Belief is the second half of the equation and often the harder one. **Belief means trusting your voice before anyone else validates it.** It means showing up fully for your mission when no one is clapping yet, when the results are not instant, and when the work feels heavier than you imagined. Belief is not blind optimism; it's a deep, unwavering knowing that what you are building matters and that you are capable of bringing it to life.

The truth is, clarity and belief are both your largest hurdle and your deepest well. They're the hurdle because they demand that you look inward, face your doubts, and choose to keep going anyway. And they're the deepest well because once you draw from them, they will sustain you through the slow seasons, the setbacks, and the days when it feels easier to quit.

This section is your mental reset button, a reminder that everything you need is already within you. Together, we will strip away the beliefs that no longer serve you and replace them with ones that will carry you forward. Your business will be built on strategy, yes—but it will be powered by the clarity and belief you choose to protect, every single day.

The Entrepreneur's Mindset Support

We all have beliefs we've picked up along the way from family, society, or past failures. But not every belief is meant to stay. Some need to be unlearned so you can finally build the life and business you deserve.

5 LIMITING BELIEFS TO LET GO OF:

1. "I NEED MONEY TO START."

→ Truth: You need courage and action to start.

2. "I'm not ready yet."

→ Truth: Starting messy is better than not starting at all.

3. "I have to do it all alone."

→ Truth: Support is a strength, not a weakness.

4. "What if I fail?"

→ Truth: Every successful entrepreneur has failed and got back up.

5. "Others are already doing it better."

→ Truth: No one else can do it like YOU.

5 EMPOWERING BELIEFS TO ADOPT:

1. I am resourceful and creative enough to figure things out.
2. I don't need to be perfect; I just need to begin.
3. My story, voice, and purpose matter.
4. I can ask for help and still be powerful.
5. Every step forward is a step toward growth.

Daily Mindset Practices

Creating a routine that centers your mind and grounds your spirit is one of the most powerful tools you have as an entrepreneur. Get to the root of the things you need and a routine that you can anchor to. Make it a point to ask these questions daily.

Anchor to your routine to navigate the natural chaos.

Morning Mindset (Start Your Day Strong)

1. What am I grateful for today?

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. One affirmation to speak over my life:

"I am _____"

3. My focus for today:

"Today, I will make progress on _____"

Evening Reflection (End Your Day with Clarity)

1. What did I accomplish today?

2. What challenged me, and what did I learn?

3. One thing I'm proud of:

4. My focus for tomorrow:

Vision Worksheet

This page is where your dream begins to take shape. Take a moment to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and picture your most successful, joy-filled business.

I AM THE CEO OF MY LIFE AND BUSINESS

I lead with vision, courage, and strategy, making empowered decisions that shape my destiny. I am both the architect and the builder of the life I desire.

Believe in this. Repeat this to yourself, write this down, doodle this.... This is the TRUTH

What kind of clients or customers am I serving? Who are they? What do they care about? How much money do they make? What industry are they in?

What products or services am I offering? What problem does it solve for them or me? How did I decide on it/them?

What does my daily routine as a CEO look like?

What is the long-term vision for my business both in the impact it creates and the wealth it generates? What's your PROFIT PLAN?

How do I feel when I wake up each morning to work on it?

How does my business make people feel?

Sketch Your Vision

Sketch or collage your dream business here.

A Day in the Life of a Mindful Entrepreneur

Your mindset isn't just about what you believe—it's about what you practice daily. We don't always control the events of the day when we are building something, there are hurdles and action items that come up. Schedule out the activities that nurture your energy and vision.

Here's an example of some of the things that help nurture entrepreneurs and they might add to the structure of their day to stay grounded, productive, and purpose-driven.

Activity	Why It Matters
Prayer or Meditation - Gratitude	Start your day grounded in peace, purpose, and clarity.
Morning Journaling & Affirmations - Mindset	Set your mindset with gratitude, vision, and self-belief.
Business Planning - Keep the Vision in View	Outline priorities and goals for the day.
Work on Income-Generating Tasks - Keep Your Mind on The Money	Focus on the actions that move your business forward.
Lunch break (EAT LUNCH!)	Nourish your body—because self-care is part of the hustle.
Connect with clients, mentors, or partners - Schedule Networking	Relationships build results. Reach out intentionally.
Creative Time (CONTENT, OFFERS, DESIGN)	Make space to build, dream, and innovate.
Review Goals & Wins of the Day	Celebrate progress and take note of lessons.
Wind Down: Reflection or Reading	Keep learning and reset your mind for tomorrow.

Your Turn: Get your Calendar Together - Schedule your Vision

Use the information and strategy below to craft a schedule that works for YOU. Your rhythm may look different—and that's okay. The goal is consistency, not perfection.

How To Build Your Calendar

First: Core Non-Negotiables (Anchor Blocks)

These are the items that are fixed, immovable, and tied to values or obligations:

- Personal well-being practices → Prayer, meditation, exercise, rest days.
- Essential personal commitments → Family time, school drop-offs, recurring appointments.
- Business “heartbeat” meetings → Weekly planning, team calls, standing client check-ins.

These go in first because if they’re not protected, they’ll get crowded out.

Second: Revenue-Generating Work

After your anchors, block your most profitable, high-value activities during your peak energy hours:

- Sales calls & proposals
- Client work delivery
- Product creation or launch tasks
- Marketing campaigns that directly impact revenue

Money is the engine, these are your prime-time driving hours.

Third: Strategic Planning & Vision Work | Schedule time for:

- Weekly and daily business planning
- Reviewing long-term goals
- Tracking progress

If you don’t schedule this, your days fill with urgent tasks and you lose sight of the bigger picture.

Four: Growth & Relationship Time | Block space for:

- Networking and outreach
- Mentorship or learning
- Creative innovation sessions

This ensures you’re not just maintaining your business, you’re growing it.

Five: Flex & Buffer Time

- White space for overflow or unexpected issues
- Short breaks and lunch
- Wind-down and reflection time

This keeps your calendar realistic instead of jam packed.

Order of Placement When Building a Calendar

1. Well-being & Personal Non-Negotiables (keeps you grounded and healthy)
2. Recurring Business Commitments (team/client meetings, key deadlines)
3. Income-Generating Activities (morning or peak-energy hours)
4. Strategy & Vision Work (weekly review, planning)
5. Growth & Relationships (networking, content creation, learning)
6. Buffer & Flex Time (space for life to happen)

Open your Calendar Chart Away

I usually brainstorm my calendar on paper in a planner or notebook and then enter it into my an eCalendar such as Google, Notion, iCal or your planning scheduling software of choice

Mindful Check-In

Building your business is a daily journey one small step at a time. Showing up for yourself consistently, even in small ways, is how belief turns into progress.

Chef Rene’s Reflection Question:

“What step do I take every day even if it’s small to show myself I believe in my vision?”

For me, I make a point to do something difficult each day, even though I’m secretly an excellent procrastinator. It’s that daily commitment that keeps my dream alive.

Chef Rene's Pro Tips

For Staying Grounded and Growing Smart

These are not just tips they're tools that breed successful habits for entrepreneurs to stay centered, focused, and in command of their time and business. Take what you need, apply it your way, and keep building your empire!

Be Strategic with Partnerships

Only say yes to partnerships that bring you **real value** and yes, **that includes financial value**. If it doesn't grow your business, protect your peace, or align with your vision, it's a no. No is a complete sentence. You should develop a strategy to sniff out opportunities that would be beneficial and stick to them.

Watch Who You Follow

Your social feed should be a source of inspiration, not distraction. Follow motivational speakers and leaders who spark something in you—someone you respect, admire, and whose journey reflects what you're building.

Read Something Empowering Everyday

Pick up a motivational or spiritual book every day even just a few pages. Ground your mindset and keep your spirit aligned with your mission.

Create a book list. Use your notes app or a wishlist to add to when you hear of a new book of interest. Read books that are mindset, industry, life skill focused.

Keep books around. I keep a book in every restroom, I have a book to read on my nightstand, in my living room. Make it convenient.

Use the Library. Our local library is an asset. The local library also has audio books that you can borrow for a listen while you are at the gym, in the car, etc.

Listen to Podcasts. Some of us aren't book people but maybe we can mix up the things we listen too. Inspiration music playlists are also amazing when regulating mindset.

Upgrade Your Voicemail & Email Signature

Use your voicemail and email signature to set boundaries and protect your time. Stick to the standards you set. Consistency sets the tone of respect in your business.

Set Office Hours, communicate personal hours, and an alternative communication method.

For Voicemail try something like: Write a script before you record

(Greeting) you've reached (Name)! Thank you for calling.

My office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., but if I'm not answering, I have stepped away from my desk.

If you're calling about business or an event booking, please leave your name, number, and all the details so I can respond as soon as time permits. If it's personal, I'll happily call you back after 6:00 p.m. Have a wonderful day and I will talk to you soon!

Email Signatures

Most mail clients have the option of saving multiple signatures. Create one that includes a response time, work time blocks along with pertinent information about contacting you. Perhaps a Calendly link, a link to a form that outlines booking business, ordering products, etc. *Check these links once a month.*

Join a Weekly Business Network

Look for a business group that meets *in person*, every week. It helps with visibility, support, and gives you a regular space to pitch your business no matter where you are in your journey.

Connect with Your Local Chambers of Commerce

Join one, visit many. These networks are powerful hubs of opportunity. You never know who you'll meet or who's waiting to meet you.

Stay Positive

When the road gets rocky, protecting your peace and energy isn't just helpful it's essential. Take a moment to identify your personal tools for staying grounded and moving forward with strength.

Chef Rene's Reflection Question:

"When things get tough, what are 3 ways I can protect my peace and keep my energy high?"

Here's what works for me:

1. Sometimes I take time to myself to refocus. I do something creative. I seek space alone in nature.
2. I pray often and trust that His will is manifesting in my life. I tap into the faith that reassures me through tough times and give thanks for the guidance and protection.
3. I push through because my business is bigger than me it's about the lives I touch. I anchor into my morning routine harder and make sure my focus is on the bigger picture.

What about you? Write your three go-to ways to stay grounded below:

1.

2.

3.

The Team Every Entrepreneur Needs

Specifically, When Starting Out

You don't need a big team, you need the right one.

Launching a start up or investing into a new venture doesn't mean doing everything on your own. Team doesn't mean staff but sometimes our staff can be apart of our team.

You can start small, smart, and supported. Whether they're unpaid cheerleaders or lean-cost professionals, these are the people who'll help you rise.



Your Best Friend

The one who holds you up when you can't hold yourself. They remind you of your "why" when you want to give up.

→ **Cost:** Free - but the support is priceless.

Your Family

The ones who cheer you on behind the scenes. They give you emotional strength and help you feel grounded when the road gets rough.

→ **Cost:** Free - but it takes communication, trust, and love.

"You don't need a full staff, you need a smart setup. Build slowly, invest wisely, and always know your value."

PR Powerhouse

This person helps the world see your light. They pitch your story to blogs, podcasts, and media outlets. You don't need to be famous you just need someone who sees your brilliance and knows how to position it.

→ **Lean cost:** \$300–\$500 for small campaigns or pitching help.

Social Media Manager

They help you show up consistently online, sharing your story with the right tone and energy. If content overwhelms you, get help! Visibility is key.

→ **Lean cost:** \$250–\$500/month for part-time support.

Marketing Guide

This is your strategist the one who helps you craft a plan to grow and reach your people. They'll show you how to turn passion into profit and ideas into impact.

→ **Lean cost:** \$500–\$1,000 for a clear, customized strategy.

Accountant

Non-negotiable. Your numbers need love too. A good accountant helps you make wise decisions and avoid money mistakes. Before you grow, get clear.

→ **Lean cost:** \$100–\$300/month for basic bookkeeping.

I START BEFORE I'M READY AND GROW AS I GO

I take inspired action, trusting that clarity comes through movement.

Every step I take teaches me, strengthens me, and brings me closer to my vision.

Believe in this. Repeat this to yourself, write this down, doodle this.... This is the TRUTH

Who's on Your Team?

Take a moment to check in with yourself. You don't need everyone at once but knowing who you have and who you need is powerful.

I Already Have:

-
-
-
-
-

I Still Need to Find:

-
-
-
-
-

Cost it Out:

Figure out the lean and true costs of these services, any deals or bartering for support should be noted and calculated as well.

Reminder: Start with who's around you. The right team grows when you're clear about your vision and open to receiving support.

Where to Start When You Have No Budget

“You may not have money, but you have time, creativity, and relationships. Use them as your first currency.”

You are the team—for now.

Be your own CEO, VA, PR person, and marketer. Focus your energy on what brings in money first. Selling your offer. Don't get stuck perfecting logos or building websites. Your first mission is to land a client or make your first sale.

Lean on your family and friends.

Ask for help that doesn't require money. Can someone watch your kids while you get work done? Can a friend repost your business on social media or introduce you to a potential client? Let your circle be your launchpad and your cheerleaders.

Use free tools to get organized and *visible*.

Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are your stage, show up daily, share behind-the-scenes, and let people into your journey. Use Canva to design graphics, Google Drive to organize your business basics, and Wave Accounting to keep track of income and expenses, all for free.

Barter and trade what you have.

If you're a chef, baker, or caterer, offer your food in exchange for services you need. A meal for a photoshoot. A baked good for social media tips. A catered dish for marketing support. Trade value for value.

Start selling NOW.

Choose one simple, high-value offer and get it in front of people. Maybe it's meal prep for busy moms, a weekend pop-up table, or your very first ebook. Talk about it online and offline, message people, and make sure your audience knows what you're offering.

Remember: The goal is not to have it all perfect—the goal is to get moving. Start small, sell, and use the first money you make to hire help little by little.”

There Will Be Peaks and Valleys

Every entrepreneurial journey has its peaks and valleys. The valleys test your strength, but they also reveal parts of you you didn't know existed. Reflecting on those moments can remind you of your resilience and fuel your forward momentum.

EVEN IN THE VALLEYS OF BUSINESS, I FIND STRENGTH AND TOOLS TO RISE

When the path feels steep and the shadows long, I use the low places to sharpen my skills, refine my vision, and prepare for the climb. These seasons build the resilience that makes my success unshakable.

Believe in this. Repeat this to yourself, write this down, doodle this.... This is the TRUTH

Chef Rene's Reflection Question:

"When I've been in a valley season before, what strengths did I discover about myself?"

I've been an entrepreneur for over 35 years, and I've walked through many valleys. There were times I wondered how I would stretch my money to feed my children. Times when I didn't feel well, but it was only me, I had to keep going. And times when a bad customer review made me question everything.

So how do I get through those valleys? I hold on to what God has promised me and choose to believe in myself. I feed my mindset daily so I can rise above the hard seasons, and I surround myself with people who know how to support me when I need it most.



5-Step Hustle Plan: From \$0 to Your First \$1,000 Fast

Step 1: Start With What You Can Sell Right Now (Day 1-2)

Focus on income, not perfection. Pick ONE simple, high-value offer a service you can deliver without needing to buy a bunch of supplies.

📌 **GOAL:** Create your offer and post about it on social media today.

Step 2: Get Loud About It (Day 2-4)

Announce your offer on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and even in your text messages.

- Post twice daily (morning motivation + evening call-to-action).
- Message 10-20 people directly:
- “Hey [name], I just launched [offer]! Do you or someone you know need this?”
- Ask friends and family to share your posts.

📌 **GOAL:** Reach 100 people in 3 days.

Step 3: Take Preorders & Collect Deposits (Day 4-5)

Don't wait for everything to be “ready.” Start accepting orders now.

Use:

- Cash App / Venmo / Zelle for fast payments
- Canva (free) to design a flyer or menu
- Google Forms to track orders

📌 **GOAL:** Secure your first \$200 in preorders this week.

Mindset Reminder: Money flows to consistency and confidence. Show up like you're already booked and busy.

Step 4: Deliver Like a Boss (Day 6-7)

Serve with excellence. Overdeliver with how your product looks and feels.

- Capture photos/videos while you're working. Post them to build trust.
- Ask every customer: "Who else needs this?"

✦ **GOAL:** Create a "hype train" of happy customers talking about you online.

Step 5: Flip Your First \$1,000 Into Growth (Week 2)

Reinvest a portion of your earnings wisely:

- \$200 for marketing (flyers, boosted posts)
- \$300 for packaging or supplies to level up
- Begin saving to hire your first helper (VA or social media support)

✦ **GOAL:** Use this momentum to double your income to \$2,000+ in the next round.

Do You Need a Business Plan to Start Your Business?

Absolutely. And here's why...

Your business plan is more than ink on paper, it's your vision in motion. It's the living blueprint that declares, "I believe in this dream enough to build it with purpose and precision." It keeps you anchored when life gets noisy and distractions threaten to pull you off course. It safeguards your energy, your resources, and your money from being wasted. And it sends a clear message to investors, partners, and clients alike, that you are serious about this vision and committed to making it real.

Think of it as your compass. Without it, you can wander endlessly. But when you're building something sacred and powerful, direction isn't optional it's essential. This isn't about chasing perfection; it's about gaining clarity. Write the vision. Make it plain. And then pursue it with everything in you, as if your future depends on it... because it does.

If you're ready to create or refine your business plan, equip yourself with tools that make the process easier and more effective. **The SBA Business Plan Guide** (sba.gov) walks you through each section step-by-step. **BPlans.com** offers free templates and real-world examples you can adapt to your business. **Score.org** connects you with experienced mentors who can review your plan and provide feedback.

And if you prefer a more interactive approach, platforms like LivePlan guide you in building a professional, investor-ready plan with built-in financial forecasting. With the right resources in your hands, you're not just dreaming... you're building with direction, confidence, and intention.

The Necessary Sections of a Business Plan

- Executive Summary
- Business Description
- Market Analysis
- Products or Services
- Operations & Management
- Marketing & Sales Strategy
- Financial Plan
- Milestones & Timeline

Insight into Your Plan

Your business plan is your vision on paper but it's also a reflection of your values, goals, and the legacy you're building. Take this moment to dig deeper and define what truly matters to you.

Ask yourself:

If my business plan is the blueprint for my legacy, what are the few things I want it to say about me and the impact I'll make?

For me, my business plan helped bring focus to the flood of ideas in my mind. It gave me a clear way to evaluate what's worth pursuing—and what could actually make money.

What's Next? Let's Make This Dream Real

MY TIME, ENERGY, AND IDEAS ARE VALUABLE.

I protect my resources and invest them where they have the most impact. I operate with the confidence that my contributions are worth premium value.

Believe in this. Repeat this to yourself, write this down, doodle this.... This is the TRUTH

You Can do these in many different orders but for the sake of providing guidance, these are the steps I have taken.

Legally Form Your Organization

This is your first step in saying, "I believe in my vision enough to protect it."

Choose Your Business Structure – Important, consult a business attorney to see which entity suits your needs best.

- LLC (Limited Liability Company) – Flexible, protects personal assets, simpler tax structure.
- Corporation (C-Corp or S-Corp) – Better for raising capital, offers formal ownership structure, more compliance requirements.

Pick a Name

- Must be unique in your state (check your Secretary of State's database).
- Follow naming rules (often must include LLC, Inc. or similar).
- Consider reserving the name if you're not filing right away.

Designate a Registered Agent

- A person or company authorized to receive legal and tax documents.
- Must have a physical address in the state of registration.

File Formation Documents

- LLC – File Articles of Organization with your state.
- Corporation – File Articles of Incorporation (or Certificate of Incorporation).
- Pay the state filing fee (ranges \$50–\$500).

Create Internal Governing Documents

- LLC – Operating Agreement (outlines ownership, management, and rules).
- Corporation – Corporate Bylaws (define board roles, voting rules, etc.).

This is where you shift from dreaming to building. The moment you take these steps, your business stops being an idea and becomes a legacy.

Get Your EIN (Employer Identification Number - Free)

- Apply for free at the IRS website.
- Needed for taxes, banking, and hiring employees.

You can do this via each state's web-based website or you can use an Agency for it. Do your research.

Create Your Logo

Design it yourself, ask a friend, or hire a freelancer on platforms like Fiverr, Upwork, or 99designs. Don't wait for perfection just get it done so your brand has a face. You can always refine it later as your business grows.

Where Will You Save It?

Decide now where your logo files will live so you can always find and share them easily. Store multiple versions (PNG, JPG, SVG, transparent background) in both:

- Cloud Storage: Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive (create a "Brand Assets" folder)
- Design Tools: Canva, Adobe Creative Cloud, Figma (keep editable versions here)
- Backup: External hard drive or USB for offline access

Helpful Resources

- Canva Logo Maker - Beginner-friendly and free templates
- Fiverr - Affordable freelancers for custom designs
- 99designs - Professional, contest-style logo creation
- Looka - AI-powered logo generator
- Colors - Build color palettes to match your brand

Open a Business Bank Account

Steps to Open a Business Bank Account

Choose the Right Bank & Account Type

- Compare fees, perks, online banking features, and minimum balance requirements.
- Decide between a checking account (day-to-day operations) and savings account (reserves or taxes).

Prepare Required Documents (varies by bank)

- Articles of Organization/Incorporation
- Operating Agreement or Corporate Bylaws
- Business license or permits
- Partnership agreement (if applicable)
- Government-issued photo ID for each owner or signer
- Proof of address (utility bill, lease, etc.)

Deposit Initial Funds

- Most banks require an opening deposit (\$25-\$1,000 depending on the bank).

Set Up Account Access & Tools

- Add authorized signers.
- Enroll in online banking, mobile deposit, and bill pay.
- Order business checks and set up a merchant account if accepting card payments.

This is where you shift from dreaming to building. The moment you take these steps, your business stops being an idea and becomes a legacy.

Set Up Account Access & Tools

- Add authorized signers.
- Enroll in online banking, mobile deposit, and bill pay.
- Order business checks and set up a merchant account if accepting card payments.

Maintain the Account Properly

- Never mix personal and business funds.
- Keep records organized for taxes and audits.
- Monitor balances and transactions regularly.

Set Up Your Social Media Accounts

Choose Your Platforms

- Pick the platforms where your audience is most active (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest).
- Start with 1-3 key platforms instead of trying to be everywhere at once.

Claim Your Business Name

- Use the same handle across all platforms for brand consistency.
- If your exact name is taken, add keywords like your industry or location. Check availability on Namechk or KnowEm.

Set Up Your Profiles Completely

- Profile Picture: Use your logo or a clear, branded image.
- Bio/About: Share who you are, what you do, and your value to your audience.
- Website Link: Direct followers to your site, store, or lead page.
- Contact Info: Include email, phone, and/or business address.

Brand Your Visuals

- Use consistent colors, fonts, and tone of voice.
- Create branded cover images and templates (Canva is a great free tool).

Post Your First Content

- Introduce yourself and your brand story.
- Share your mission, what you offer, and how people can connect.
- Use high-quality photos or videos that reflect your brand personality.
- Engage Before You Grow
- Follow related accounts in your niche.
- Like, comment, and share content to start conversations.
- Respond promptly to DMs and comments.

Plan Your Content

- Create a posting schedule (2-4 times a week to start).
- Mix content types: education, inspiration, behind-the-scenes, promotions, and testimonials.
- Use a content calendar to stay consistent.

Track & Adjust

- Review analytics monthly to see what's working.
- Double down on content your audience responds to.

Find and Decide Your Business Location – You Can Start Anywhere

Clarify Your Needs

- Determine the space requirements for your business (size, layout, storage, equipment).
- Consider whether you need a physical storefront, office, shared workspace, or production space.

This is where you shift from dreaming to building. The moment you take these steps, your business stops being an idea and becomes a legacy.

Start Where You Are

- Remember: Many successful businesses began in kitchens, garages, and spare rooms.
- Use what you have now to begin generating income before committing to a lease.

Research Potential Locations

- Look at foot traffic, accessibility, parking, and safety.
- Check proximity to your target customers or suppliers.
- Evaluate competition in the area.

Check Zoning & Regulations

- Verify that the location is zoned for your type of business.
- If starting from home, check local home-business regulations and HOA rules.

Consider the Costs

- Factor in rent/mortgage, utilities, insurance, and maintenance.
- Don't overextend, choose a space you can comfortably afford at your current stage.

Negotiate Terms (if leasing)

- Understand the lease length, renewal options, and included amenities.
- Ask for rent concessions or improvements from the landlord.

Set Up for Success

- Design your space for productivity, customer comfort, and brand presence.
- Keep it flexible to allow for future growth.

Know Your Numbers

Even if You Have to Estimate: Write Down All of Your Personal and Business Bills

- Personal: housing, utilities, food, transportation, debt, insurance, childcare, phone, subscriptions, savings goals.
- Business (fixed): software, insurance, rent, internet/phone, payroll base, licenses, bookkeeping.
- Business (variable/COGS): materials, packaging, contractors, payment processing, shipping (estimate as a % of sales).
- Tally: Personal Total (PT), Business Fixed Total (BFT), and an estimated COGS% of revenue. Consider adding a small Profit/Buffer (\$ or %) and any Debt Payments.

Decide: Will my business cover all my expenses or just some?

- Choose the share of personal expenses your business will fund (e.g., 100% or 60%).
- Calculate Owner Pay Target (OPT) = (Coverage % × PT) + monthly savings you want to fund.

Calculate: How much business do I need to bring in each month to make that happen?

- Pick a conservative Tax Reserve % (commonly 25–30% of profit; for planning you can use this as a rough % of revenue).
- Use this planning formula to find your *Monthly Revenue Target (R)*:
 - $R = (\text{OPT} + \text{BFT} + \text{Profit/Buffer} + \text{Debt Payments}) \div (1 - \text{COGS}\% - \text{Tax Reserve}\%)$
- Quick example: OPT \$4,240, BFT \$1,260, Buffer \$500 → numerator \$6,000. If COGS 25% and Tax Reserve 25%, denominator = $1 - 0.25 - 0.25 = 0.50$ → $R = \$12,000/\text{month}$.

Translate into action:

- Weekly goal $\approx R \div 4.33 \rightarrow$ about \$2,770/week.
- Daily goal (22 workdays) $\approx R \div 22 \rightarrow$ about \$545/day.
- Units/clients needed = $R \div \text{Avg. Sale}$ (e.g., $\$12,000 \div \$150 = 80$ sales).

This is where you shift from dreaming to building. The moment you take these steps, your business stops being an idea and becomes a legacy.

Pause & Reflect

There will be days when doubt creeps in, but don't let that shake your foundation. Your business is real and every step you take is proof that you're building something that matters.

What can I do today to remind myself that my business is real and deserves my commitment?

Rene's Pro Tip: If you ever need a reminder that your business has value, call one of your happy customers. Their voice, their gratitude, it's all the proof you need to smile and keep going another day.

How Do You Get Support for Your Business from Other Businesses?

You get support by giving it first.

When you show up for other businesses by sharing their posts, buying their products and/or referring their services, you create a ripple effect that extends far beyond one purchase or one post.

It's the seed of a thriving local economy and a stronger network of like minded entrepreneurs who lift each other higher.

People remember who clapped for them when the room was quiet. That goodwill becomes trust, and that trust comes back to you multiplied: through referrals, collaborations, and opportunities you never could have planned for.

**Support creates community.
Community creates momentum.
Momentum creates success.**

When you invest in other small businesses, you help keep money circulating locally, which strengthens neighborhoods, creates jobs, and preserves the unique character of your area. You're not just buying a product, you're sustaining someone's dream, and that's priceless.

What you give will always find its way back to you in customers who are already loyal before they even meet you, in opportunities that align perfectly with your vision, and in a business community that sees you as a leader worth rallying behind.



When we rise together, we rise stronger.

Make It Personal

This is your moment to turn insight into intention. Take a breath, be honest with yourself, and let your answer guide your next move.

Chef Rene's Reflection Question:

"How can I intentionally support another entrepreneur this week, knowing that what I give will come back to me?"

Here's how I do it: I try my best to speak positively about other entrepreneurs, and whenever I can, I send other businesses their way. Once a month, I highlight a fellow entrepreneur in my newsletter and on social media —not because I have to, but because I believe in the power of showing up for others.

Now it's your turn: Put it into practice.

- Whose business can you celebrate this week?

- Is there a post you can share, a referral you can send, or a kind word you can speak?

- Write down one intentional act of support you'll give this week and do it from the heart.

"Support doesn't have to be big. It just has to be real".

Make Your Business Bigger Than You

When you tie your business to a cause, you invite people to be part of something meaningful.

It becomes more than just a product or service... it becomes a mission. That mission fuels you on the days when motivation fades and challenges feel overwhelming.

And when your mission is clear, it naturally attracts people who share your values. Customers, partners, investors, and media outlets who want to be associated with positive impact.

This creates opportunities for collaborations, sponsorships, and joint ventures that wouldn't come your way without the emotional and social connection your cause inspires.

A cause gives your work heart. It creates a reason for your customers to believe in what you do. It builds connection and trust, and most of all it gives your business legacy.

For me, my cause is close to home: ***encouraging parents to feed their children real, nourishing food and bringing awareness to childhood diabetes.*** This isn't just something I say, it's something I live. When things get hard, I remember why I started, and it keeps me going.

Cause driven businesses also open doors to new markets and customer segments. People who might never have noticed your brand before will pay attention because they connect with the "why" behind what you do. This can lead to increased customer loyalty, repeat business, and word-of-mouth referrals: some of the most cost effective marketing you can get.

Additionally, aligning with a cause can position your business for grants, awards, and tax incentives designed to support socially responsible initiatives. It can boost your visibility in press features and speaking engagements, raising your authority and trust in the marketplace.

The more people see you as both a business leader and a change maker, the more they want to support you and that support translates into revenue and long-term growth.

How Do I Find Local Causes and Organizations in my Area?

Nonprofit & Charity Directories

Local Government & Chamber of Commerce

Social Media & Community Groups

Philanthropy & Grant Databases

Find Your Cause

Don't Skip This!

Your business has the power to be a force for good.

This is your moment to reflect on what matters most and how your work can be part of something bigger.

What breaks your heart, inspires you, or keeps you up at night? How could your business play a part in solving it?

Write down 2-3 causes you care about deeply: Research. In the corner of page 27, there is a list of resources to find your local or nationwide cause.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Which one feels closest to your heart? How could you start weaving it into your business?

Take your time with this. Purpose fuels perseverance and you're building something that matters.

Protect Your Peace

Identify Your Circle of Strength

No one builds a dream alone and you shouldn't try to. Behind every successful business is a network of support: mentors, cheerleaders, tough-love truth-tellers, and loyal customers who believe in what you do.

This section helps you assess the people around you, find those who truly uplift you, and set up structures to stay encouraged and accountable as you grow. The right support system isn't a luxury it's a necessity.



Support System Blueprint

Who's In? Who's Out?

Your circle matters. The people you spend the most time with influence how you think, what you believe is possible, and whether you stay on track or get pulled off course. This is your chance to reflect and choose intentionally.

Step 1: Assess Your Circle

Think of the 5 people you interact with the most.
Ask: Do they support my growth? Or drain my energy?

NAME	ROLE IN MY LIFE	SUPPORTIVE OR DRAINING	KEEP CLOSE OR CREATE SPACE

Step 2: Make Space for Support

- Who energizes you? Keep them close.
- Who doubts your vision or makes you second-guess yourself? Set boundaries.
- Who challenges you to rise higher? Lean into that growth.

Reminder: *You don't need a large circle. You need a strong one.*

Finding Your People

If you don't yet have the support system you need, that's okay. You can build one. Even if you're starting from scratch, there are ways to connect with others who will champion your vision.

Where to Find Support

- **Online Communities:** Join Facebook groups or LinkedIn spaces for entrepreneurs in your field.
- **Events & Webinars:** Attend local meetups, pop-ups, or free virtual events.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Look into community organizations, churches, or women's networks.
- **Collaborations:** Reach out to others in your niche for cross-promotions or shared events.
- **Customers:** Your biggest supporters often start as your clients—serve them well, and they'll advocate for you.

Who can you reach out to this month?

List 3 people to connect with personally or professionally.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Don't overthink it. A message, a coffee, a DM—start the conversation.



“You don't have to be well-known to be well-connected. You just have to be intentional.”

Accountability Partner Tracker

Having someone to check in with each week can help you stay focused, celebrate wins, and troubleshoot challenges before they spiral.

Use this sheet to keep track of weekly check-ins with your accountability partner. You can be each other's motivation, sounding board, and cheerleader.

WEEK	DATE	THIS WEEK'S GOALS	WINS	CHALLENGES	NEXT STEPS
1					
2					
3					
4					

Make sure you schedule and plan intentionally in your digital calendar and/or planner.

Pro Tip: Use voice notes or quick video calls to stay connected and consistent.

30 Day Action Plan

You've got the mindset. You've got the heart.
Some of us learn differently and need a more visual representation
of an action plan.

This section gives you a simple, clear plan for the next 30 days.
No overwhelm, No fluff.

**Just focused steps to help you go from "I have an idea" to "I
made my first move."**

- **Clear Steps** → Follow an easy visual flow from idea to action.
- **Track Progress** → Check off wins and watch momentum build.
- **Stay Inspired** → Milestones and Mindset keep you motivated.
- **Celebrate Wins** → See how far you've come at a glance.

Perfect for launching your first product, booking dream clients, or
putting your business out into the world.
Your success is right in front of your eyes



Your First 30 Days as a Boss!

"You don't need to have it all figured out. Just commit to showing up every day." Add these to your calendar!

Week 1: Mindset & Mission

- Read the mindset section again
- Write your personal "Why"
- Choose your daily affirmations
- Create a simple morning routine
- Start journaling your thoughts

Focus: Belief over fear

Week 2: Build Your Offer

- List what you're good at or love doing
- Decide how you can turn it into an offer (product/service)
- Create a one-sentence pitch
- Draft a simple pricing structure
- Share your offer with a friend for feedback

Focus: Clarity Over Perfection

Week 3: Share Your Story

- Write your origin story (What led you here?)
- Post your story on social media or tell someone in person
- Update your bio or about section
- Create a simple flyer or post about your offer
- Ask for 1 testimonial (real or sample)

Focus: Connection over comparison

Week 4: Sell Your First Product/Service

- Make a list of 10 people to tell about your offer
- Reach out with your pitch
- Follow up with kindness & confidence
- Ask for feedback, adjust as needed
- Celebrate your first sale no matter how small!

Focus: Action over fear

Daily Progress Tracker

For the next 30 days, commit to building momentum through small, consistent actions: **start your morning and end your evening with affirmations, complete one meaningful business task, and take a moment to celebrate a win each day.**

This simple practice can significantly boost your focus, motivation, and overall success.

Use this tracker to stay on track and check off your progress daily because lasting success is built one intentional step at a time.

Day	Morning Affirmation	Mindset Practice	Business Tasks	Win of the Day
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Daily Progress Tracker

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.”
– Robert Collier.

Pro Tip: Set calendar reminders or phone alarms for each action so they become a natural part of your day. Finish strong, track your consistency and confidence all the way to the end.

Day	Morning Affirmation	Mindset Practice	Business Tasks	Win of the Day
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
27	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
28	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
29	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

BONUS: Vision Board Template

Create the Vision Before You Build the Business

Your dreams deserve to be seen. This digital vision board is your space to picture the business and life you're building even if you're starting from nothing. Visualization is a powerful tool that helps align your mindset, actions, and intentions.

And while your digital board travels with you anywhere, a physical dream board has its own magic. It becomes a daily visual reminder in your space a tangible anchor that keeps your goals front and center. Seeing your vision in a place you pass by every day can spark fresh motivation, inspire creative ideas, and help you stay consistent when the hustle gets heavy. It's a quiet but constant nudge that says, "This is where you're headed keep going."

Choose a Canva Template to drag, drop, and design your vision. What to add for the most impactful Vision Board?

Visual Inspiration

- Images of your dream workspace, whether it's a sleek downtown office, a cozy home studio, or a beachside desk.
- Photos of your dream home or travel destinations to keep your lifestyle goals in view.
- A photo of someone who inspires you a mentor, industry leader, or public figure who embodies the success and values you admire.
- Your ideal product or service in action real or conceptual images showing your offering at its best.

Rene's Pro Tip: This really works. I love doing this because I can see where I am going, and I can see if I take a wrong turn. **DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP!**

Motivation & Mindset

- Quotes that fire you up, statements that instantly remind you why you're doing this.
- Affirmations short, powerful "I am" statements to reinforce confidence and possibility.
- Words that describe how your business feels luxury, playful, innovative, grounded, etc.
- Symbols of achievement awards, milestones, or badges that represent your goals.

Business & Financial Goals

- Your dream clients photos or mood boards representing the type of people or brands you want to work with.
- Income goals specific numbers or symbolic images that represent your financial aspirations.
- Milestone visuals book covers, product launches, speaking events, or collaborations you want to achieve.

Lifestyle & Well-being

- Your dream daily routine visuals for morning rituals, self-care practices, or work-life balance.
- Health & wellness goals imagery for fitness, mindfulness, or nourishment.
- Experiences you want to have events, adventures, or causes you want to support.

Printable Version

Congratulations Boss!




You did it.

You've just taken a bold, beautiful step toward building the life and business you deserve. This journey isn't just about strategy it's about showing up for yourself, every single day. Stay consistent. Stay strong. Stay rooted in your "why."

And remember you already have everything you need to start right where you are.

STAY CONNECTED!

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