FREE WORKSHEET | VIDEO 1 | CHAPTER 1

Plan B Starter Worksheet

Is a Plan B worth exploring? A 10-minute self-check, plus five ideas to react to.

How to use this worksheet. Type into the boxes (the PDF is fillable) or print it. It takes about ten minutes. This is *not* the readiness assessment, and you aren't deciding whether to launch anything. You're deciding whether having another option is worth exploring.

Step 1: Is a Plan B worth exploring?

Check any statement that feels relevant.

Protection

- ☐ Too much of my financial security depends on one employer or one salary.
- ☐ Restructuring, outsourcing, automation, AI, or industry shifts have made me think harder about my career options.
- ☐ I'd feel more secure knowing I had another source of income or a business I could develop if I needed it.

Utilization

- ☐ I have skills, knowledge, or experience that may be useful to people outside my employer.
- ☐ People regularly ask me for advice or help in areas I've come to think of as routine.
- ☐ I suspect some of what I know has commercial value, but I don't know how to turn it into an offer.

Possibility

- ☐ I'd like more control over how I use my expertise.
- ☐ I'm curious about entrepreneurship, but I don't want to gamble my existing career to explore it.
- ☐ I'd like an additional income stream even if I stay employed long term.
- ☐ I don't know whether I'll ever want to leave my career, and I like the idea of not having to decide yet.

> **Notice what you haven't decided**
> You haven't decided to quit your job, invest money, or choose a business. You've only decided that having another option may be valuable. That's enough for now. If none of these statements resonated, this may not be the right project for you right now, and that's useful to know.

Two questions to carry forward

You don't need confident answers yet. The next chapters help you make them concrete.

If I explored this, which time or relationship would I most want to protect?

Am I willing to spend some of my available time finding and talking with suitable customers, even if I decide this idea isn't worth pursuing?

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Step 2: Your raw material

Fill these in before you use the AI prompt. "Unknown" is a fine answer.

My role and years of experience

What people regularly ask me for help with

Problems I'm especially good at solving

Hours I can realistically sustain each week, and when

Constraints I want the business to respect (employer rules, family time, budget, no evenings, and so on)

Step 3: Generate ideas with AI (about 10 minutes)

Copy the prompt below into your preferred AI tool (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or another) and replace the brackets with your answers from Step 2.

COPY AND PASTE INTO YOUR AI TOOL

Role: You're helping an experienced professional explore side-business ideas they could build alongside their job.

My role and years of experience: [ ]

What people regularly ask me for help with: [ ]

Problems I'm especially good at solving: [ ]

Hours per week I can realistically sustain: [ ]

Constraints I want the business to respect (employer rules, family time, budget, no evenings, etc.): [ ]

Task: Suggest 5 possible directions. For each, tell me who might pay, what problem it solves, why my background is relevant, and one realistic way to reach those buyers (say "unknown" if you can't tell, and don't invent an audience). Name the weakest assumption in each. Don't tell me to quit my job, build a website, create a course, or spend money. End with three questions I should answer before taking any idea seriously.

> **Before you paste anything**
>
> AI can sound confident and be wrong. Don't paste confidential employer or client information into an AI tool, and follow any employer policy on AI use.

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Step 4: React to the ideas. Don't let AI decide.

Read the five possibilities. **Cross out** anything that clearly doesn't fit your life or interests. **Circle** the two or three that make you curious. Then record your thinking here.

#	Possible direction	Weakest assumption	My verdict (cross out, maybe, circle)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

What I'd still need to learn before believing any of these could become a real business

> **An idea isn't evidence. It's a hypothesis.**
> Close the AI chat now. Your next step is the Employer Check (Video 2), so you know your boundaries before you take any outside step.

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Worked example (fictional)

Marcus, 44, is an operations manager at a mid-sized manufacturer with 18 years of experience. His employer has restructured twice in three years. People regularly ask him to fix scheduling and supplier problems. He can sustain about 5 hours a week, mostly Saturday mornings.

#	Possible direction	Weakest assumption	My verdict
1	Process audit for small manufacturers (Specific Interventionist)	That small manufacturers will pay for an outside audit instead of doing it themselves	Circle
2	Fractional operations adviser for a few small firms (Retainer Partner)	That I can avoid being on call during my job's working hours	Maybe
3	Workshop for new supervisors (Knowledge Guide)	That I can reach enough supervisors without an existing audience	Maybe
4	Help with software implementations	That my technical knowledge is current enough	Cross out
5	Consulting for large manufacturers	Overlaps my employer's customers, and I haven't read my agreement yet	Cross out

What Marcus still needs to learn

Who actually decides to buy an audit at a small manufacturer, and where he can find them without using his employer's contacts. Whether his employment agreement allows this kind of outside work. Whether five hours a week covers finding customers as well as doing the work.

> **Why this example works**
>
> Marcus didn't pick the "best" idea. He named a weak assumption for each, noticed a possible employer overlap, and wrote down what he needs to learn. That's a decision he can act on this week.

> **What this means, and what to do next**
>
> Filling this in is the first step. The next step is in Chapter 1 of *The Zero Guesswork Business Blueprint*. Book owners also get the full edition of this worksheet and the complete AI Prompt Library; access details are in the book.

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