

The Side Hustle Launch Checklist

30 steps to go from idea to your first paying customer

You don't need an LLC, a business plan, or a course you'll never finish. You need to know, in order, what to do first. This checklist is that order — five stages, six steps each, plus five AI prompts that do half the writing for you.

Check each box as you go. Don't skip Stage 1, even though it's tempting to.

STAGE 1 — VALIDATE

Confirm people will actually pay before you build anything

- [] **1. Write the problem down in one sentence.** Not the solution — the problem. “People don't know how to start a side hustle” is a problem. “I'm going to build an app” is not.
- [] **2. List 3 ways people currently solve this problem without you.** Every real problem already has workarounds, even bad ones. If you can't find any, that's a warning sign, not a green light.
- [] **3. Find 10 people who have this problem.** Facebook groups, subreddits, your own contacts — wherever they already talk about it.
- [] **4. Ask 5 of them directly: “Would you pay for something that did X?”** Write down their exact words, not your summary of what they meant.
- [] **5. Set a real price, even if it's a guess.** A number forces the conversation to get specific instead of staying hypothetical.
- [] **6. Get one person to say yes before you build anything else.** One real “yes, I'd pay for that” is worth more than a hundred polite nods.

STAGE 2 — SET UP

The only 6 basics you need — no LLC or business plan required

- [] **7. Pick a name.** Your own name works fine. Don't let this stall you for more than a day.
- [] **8. Set up one way to track income and expenses separately from your personal money.** A dedicated account or even a separate spreadsheet — just don't mix it in with your grocery money.
- [] **9. Set up one place to receive payment.** Stripe, PayPal, or a platform that handles it for you. Pick one and move on.
- [] **10. Create one email address just for this.** Keeps your side hustle out of your personal inbox and looks more legitimate to buyers.

[] **11. Set up a simple way to deliver what you're selling.** A shared folder, a private link, a booking tool — whatever gets it to the buyer without you doing it manually every time.

[] **12. Decide your weekly time budget.** Write down the number of hours. This is what keeps a side hustle from quietly eating your evenings.

STAGE 3 — FIRST OFFER

Build an offer simple enough to launch this week

[] **13. Write your offer in one sentence.** “I help [who] do [what] so they can [result].” If you can't say it in one sentence, it's not ready to sell yet.

[] **14. Cut it down to the smallest version that still delivers real value.** You can always add more later. You can't un-launch something that took a month to build.

[] **15. Decide what's included — and just as important, what's not.** Scope creep kills side hustles before they start.

[] **16. Set your launch price.** Start lower than you think. You can raise it once you have real buyers and real proof it works.

[] **17. Create the one page or message that explains the offer.** It doesn't need to be fancy. It needs to be clear.

[] **18. Set a real launch date.** Not “when it's ready” — an actual date on the calendar.

STAGE 4 — FIRST SALE

The exact outreach that gets your first real customer

[] **19. List 20 people who might want this, or know someone who does.** Start warm. Your network is faster than cold strangers.

[] **20. Message 10 of them directly.** A short, specific message beats a vague public post every time.

[] **21. Post about it once, in a place your ideal buyer already spends time.** One well-placed post beats posting everywhere half-heartedly.

[] **22. Follow up with anyone who showed interest but didn't buy.** Most sales happen on the follow-up, not the first message.

[] **23. Ask every buyer one question: “What almost stopped you from buying?”** This single question will teach you more than any amount of guessing.

[] **24. Deliver on time, and slightly better than promised.** Your first few buyers become your first referrals — or they don't.

STAGE 5 — SCALE

Turn one sale into a repeatable system

- [] **25. Write down every step you took to make that first sale.** While it's fresh. You'll forget the details in a week.
- [] **26. Turn your best-performing message or post into a template.** Something you can reuse instead of starting from scratch every time.
- [] **27. Ask your first 3 buyers for a short testimonial or permission to share their result.** Real words from real buyers do more work than anything you'll write yourself.
- [] **28. Set a weekly outreach number and hit it no matter what.** Even a small consistent number beats sporadic bursts of effort.
- [] **29. Track what's working every week.** Where buyers are coming from, what they respond to, what falls flat.
- [] **30. Decide the one thing you'll do more of next month.** Based on what actually worked — not what you hoped would work.

BONUS: 5 AI Prompts That Do Half the Work For You

Copy, paste, and fill in the brackets.

1. Clarify your one-sentence offer

"Turn this list of what I do into one clear sentence that explains who it's for and what result they get: [paste your notes]."

2. Make outreach sound human

"Rewrite this message so it sounds like a real person reaching out, not an ad: [paste your message]."

3. Handle objections before they come up

"Here's my offer: [paste]. What's the most likely objection a skeptical buyer would have, and how do I answer it in two sentences?"

4. Find the pattern in what buyers are telling you

"Here are notes from conversations with potential buyers: [paste notes]. Summarize the 3 most common reasons they want this."

5. Turn a plan into a checklist you'll actually follow

"Turn this list of steps into a short weekly checklist, written simply enough that I won't overthink it: [paste your steps]."

This checklist won't do the work for you — but it will tell you exactly what order to do it in.