

The small business guide to AI - Resources

Essential tools, software, and learning materials for small business owners

AI assistants and writing tools

General-purpose AI assistants

- **ChatGPT Plus** – Versatile AI for writing, strategy, research, and problem-solving
- **Claude Pro** – Advanced reasoning and analysis, excellent for complex tasks
- **Google Gemini** – Integrated with Google Workspace tools
- **Microsoft Copilot** – AI across Microsoft 365 apps

AI writing and content creation

- **Jasper AI** – Marketing-focused AI writing assistant
 - **Copy.ai** – Quick copy generation for ads, social media, and emails
 - **Writesonic** – AI content creation with SEO features
 - **Grammarly** – AI-powered writing assistant and editor
 - **Rytr** – Affordable AI writing tool for small businesses
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Customer service AI

Chatbot platforms

- **Tidio** – User-friendly chatbot with free tier, great for small businesses
- **Freshdesk** – Customer support platform with "Freddy AI" assistant (free version available)
- **Zendesk** – Comprehensive support platform with AI features
- **Intercom** – Conversational support with AI capabilities
- **HubSpot Chatbot** – Free chatbot builder integrated with HubSpot CRM
- **Drift** – Conversational marketing and sales chatbot

Live chat and support

- **LiveChat** – Real-time customer chat with AI suggestions
- **Crisp** – Customer messaging platform with chatbot features

- **Olark** – Simple live chat for small businesses
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Marketing and social media AI

Social media management

- **Buffer** – Simple social scheduling with AI-powered suggestions
- **Hootsuite** – Multi-platform management with AI content recommendations
- **Predis.ai** – AI-powered social media content creation
- **Later** – Visual Instagram planning with AI caption suggestions
- **Sprout Social** – Comprehensive social management with AI analytics
- **Ocoya** – AI social media content creation and scheduling

Email marketing with AI

- **Constant Contact** – AI-powered email writing and automation
- **Mailchimp** – Email marketing with AI content suggestions
- **ActiveCampaign** – Advanced automation with AI-driven personalization
- **Klaviyo** – E-commerce focused email marketing with AI segmentation
- **ConvertKit** – Creator-focused email with AI features
- **HubSpot Email** – Free email marketing with AI assistance

Content optimization

- **Surfer SEO** – AI content optimization for search rankings
 - **Frase** – AI-powered content briefs and optimization
 - **Clearscope** – Content optimization based on search intent
 - **MarketMuse** – AI content planning and gap analysis
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Financial management AI

AI-powered accounting

- **Sage Accounting** – AI assistant "Sage Copilot" for forecasting and automation
- **QuickBooks Online** – Small business accounting with AI categorization
- **Xero** – Online accounting with AI-powered features
- **FreshBooks** – Invoicing and accounting with automated features
- **Wave** – Free accounting software with basic automation

Specialized financial AI

- **ReinvestWealth** – AI Bookkeeper for automated bookkeeping and tax deductions
- **Otto AI** – AI automation combined with human finance team review
- **Vic.ai** – AI invoice processing and expense categorization
- **Bench** – Professional bookkeeping service with AI assistance

- **Pilot** – Accounting and tax for startups with AI tools

Invoicing and payments

- **Stripe** – Payment processing with automated invoicing
 - **PayPal Business** – Invoicing and payment collection
 - **Square Invoices** – Simple invoicing for small businesses
 - **Bonsai** – Contracts, invoicing, and client management
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Operations and productivity AI

Scheduling and calendar

- **Calendly** – Automated appointment scheduling
- **Acuity Scheduling** – Client booking with automated reminders
- **Cal.com** – Open-source scheduling with AI features
- **x.ai** – AI scheduling assistant for meetings
- **Reclaim.ai** – AI calendar management and time blocking

Meeting and transcription

- **Otter.ai** – AI meeting transcription and summaries
- **Fireflies.ai** – Meeting transcription with action item tracking
- **Fathom** – Free AI meeting recorder and summarizer
- **tl;dv** – Meeting recorder with AI highlights
- **Grain** – Video meeting highlights and summaries

Task and project management

- **Notion AI** – AI built into workspace for docs and planning
- **ClickUp** – Project management with AI writing assistant
- **Monday.com** – Work management with AI automation
- **Asana** – Project tracking with AI task suggestions
- **Trello** – Visual boards with Power-Up integrations

Automation and integration

- **Zapier** – Connect 6,000+ apps with automated workflows
 - **Make (formerly Integromat)** – Visual automation builder
 - **IFTTT** – Simple if-this-then-that automation
 - **n8n** – Open-source workflow automation
 - **Microsoft Power Automate** – Automation for Microsoft users
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Inventory management AI

E-commerce platforms with built-in AI

- **Shopify Magic** – AI features built into Shopify platform
- **Adobe Commerce (Magento)** – Adobe Sensei AI for e-commerce
- **BigCommerce** – E-commerce with AI-powered features
- **WooCommerce** – WordPress e-commerce with AI plugins

Inventory-specific tools

- **Cin7** – Inventory management with demand forecasting
 - **TradeGecko (QuickBooks Commerce)** – Inventory with smart reordering
 - **Ordoro** – Inventory and shipping automation
 - **Katana** – Manufacturing inventory with AI planning
 - **Stocky** – Shopify inventory forecasting app
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AI image and design tools

AI image generation

- **Midjourney** – High-quality AI image generation
- **DALL-E 3** – OpenAI's image generator (in ChatGPT Plus)
- **Canva AI** – AI design tools in user-friendly platform
- **Leonardo AI** – AI art generation with more control
- **Adobe Firefly** – AI image generation integrated with Adobe tools
- **Stable Diffusion** – Open-source AI image generation

Design platforms with AI

- **Canva Pro** – User-friendly design with AI features
 - **Adobe Express** – Quick design with AI assistance
 - **Figma** – Collaborative design with AI plugins
 - **Looka** – AI logo and brand kit generator
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AI video tools

Video creation

- **Lumen5** – Turn blog posts into videos automatically
- **Pictory** – AI video creation from long-form content
- **Synthesia** – AI avatar videos for training and marketing
- **InVideo** – AI video creation with templates
- **Kling AI** – Advanced AI video generation

Video editing

- **Descript** – AI-powered video editing with transcription
 - **Runway** – AI video editing and effects
 - **CapCut** – Free video editing with AI features
 - **Adobe Premiere Pro** – Professional editing with AI tools
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Research and analytics

AI research tools

- **Perplexity AI** – AI-powered research and answers with sources
- **ChatGPT with browsing** – Research with real-time web access
- **Consensus** – AI search for scientific research

Analytics platforms

- **Google Analytics 4** – Free website analytics with AI insights
 - **Hotjar** – Heatmaps and user behavior with AI analysis
 - **Mixpanel** – Product analytics with AI-powered insights
 - **Amplitude** – User analytics with AI recommendations
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Learning resources

Books for AI in business

- **"The AI-First Company"** by Ash Fontana – Building AI into business strategy
- **"Human + Machine"** by Paul Daugherty and H. James Wilson – AI collaboration
- **"Prediction Machines"** by Ajay Agrawal – Economics of AI
- **"AI Superpowers"** by Kai-Fu Lee – Understanding AI's business impact
- **"The Big Nine"** by Amy Webb – Future of AI and business

Free courses and training

- **Google AI Essentials** – Free course on AI fundamentals
- **HubSpot AI Marketing Course** – Free AI marketing certification
- **LinkedIn Learning** – AI for business courses
- **Coursera** – AI for Everyone by Andrew Ng (free to audit)
- **Microsoft Learn** – Free AI fundamentals training

Blogs and newsletters

- **The Neuron** – Daily AI news for business
- **TLDR AI** – AI news and insights newsletter
- **Ben's Bites** – Daily AI updates for practitioners
- **Marketing AI Institute** – AI for marketers

- **HubSpot AI Blog** – AI marketing insights

YouTube channels

- **Matt Wolfe** – AI tools and tutorials
- **AI Explained** – Understanding AI developments
- **The AI Advantage** – Practical AI for business
- **Wes Roth** – AI news and analysis

Podcasts

- **Hard Fork** – Technology and AI news
 - **The AI Podcast (NVIDIA)** – AI applications and research
 - **Practical AI** – Real-world AI applications
 - **Marketing AI Show** – AI for marketing professionals
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Privacy and compliance resources

Regulations to understand

- **GDPR** – EU General Data Protection Regulation
- **DMA** – EU Digital Markets Act
- **CCPA** – California Consumer Privacy Act
- **Industry-specific regulations** – HIPAA (health), PCI DSS (payments)

Compliance tools

- **Cookiebot** – Cookie consent management
 - **OneTrust** – Privacy management platform
 - **Termly** – Privacy policy and consent tools
 - **iubenda** – Legal compliance for websites
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AI tool directories and comparison sites

- **There's An AI For That** – Directory of AI tools by category
 - **Futurepedia** – AI tools database
 - **AI Tool Report** – AI tool reviews and comparisons
 - **Product Hunt** – New AI tool launches
 - **G2** – Software reviews including AI tools
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Quick reference

Getting started essentials

1. AI assistant (ChatGPT Plus or Claude Pro)
2. Chatbot for customer service (Tidio or HubSpot free)
3. Email marketing with AI (Mailchimp or HubSpot free)
4. Automation connector (Zapier free tier)
5. AI-enhanced accounting (QuickBooks or Wave)

Monthly budget guide

- **Under \$50/month:** ChatGPT Plus (\$20) + Tidio free + Mailchimp free + Zapier free
- **\$50-150/month:** Add Surfer SEO, Buffer, better email automation
- **\$150-300/month:** Add specialized tools for your biggest needs
- **\$300+/month:** Full AI stack across all business functions

Remember: Start with the essentials and add tools as specific needs arise. The best tool is the one you'll actually use consistently.

Stay current: AI tools evolve rapidly. Review this resource list quarterly and follow at least two AI newsletters to stay informed about new capabilities.