

# Launch Your Solo Service Business in 90 Days Without the Guesswork

A week-by-week action plan with pricing calculator for first-time coaches, VAs, and designers

*For: First-time solopreneurs aged 28–45 who are leaving corporate jobs or growing a side hustle into a full business; they are anxious, action-oriented but overwhelmed, unsure how to price themselves or find their first paying clients, and need concrete steps over motivational theory*

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# Why Most Solo Launches Stall (And How Yours Won't)

You're not stuck because you lack talent, ideas, or drive. You're stuck because you're trying to do month-three tasks in week one.

This is the most common reason solo service launches stall. Someone decides to go out on their own, then immediately starts building a full website, obsessing over a logo, researching LLC structures in four states, and drafting a six-month content calendar — all before they've signed a single client. The energy is real. The sequence is broken.

Anxiety loves to masquerade as productivity. When the path feels unclear, your brain defaults to the tasks that *feel* like progress — tweaking colors, writing bios, building systems for clients you don't have yet. Meanwhile, the actual revenue-generating work gets pushed to "once everything is ready." Everything is never ready. That's not a mindset problem. It's a sequencing problem, and sequencing problems have solutions.

## Why You Have an Advantage Right Now

Here's what most people don't realize when they leave a corporate job or grow a side hustle into something real: **service businesses reach revenue faster than almost any other business model.** You don't need inventory, a supply chain, or a finished product. You need a clear offer, a fair price, and one person who needs what you do. That's it. A coach, VA, or designer can go from zero to first paid client in under 30 days if the sequence is right.

This guide is built around that sequence.

## The Three Phases

- **Days 1–30: Foundation.** You lock in five non-negotiable decisions — who you serve, what you offer, how you price it, how clients pay you, and how you deliver. Nothing else gets your attention yet.
- **Days 31–60: Visibility.** With your foundation set, you start showing up in the specific places your ideal clients already are. No massive audience required.
- **Days 61–90: Client Acquisition.** You move conversations to contracts using a simple, repeatable sequence — no hard selling, no chasing.

## What This Guide Covers (And What It Doesn't)

This PDF covers one thing: launching a solo service business and landing your first paying clients within 90 days. It does not cover passive income, digital products, affiliate marketing, or building a team. Those may be right for you later. They are not relevant right now, and including them would slow you down.

## How to Use This PDF

Read it straight through once to orient yourself. Then go section by section, in order. When you hit **Section 3**, open the pricing calculator and fill it in before moving on — don't skim it. When you reach **Section 5**, print the 90-day checklist or copy it into a doc you'll actually open every week.

Your only job right now is to follow the sequence. Let's start with your foundation.

# Build Your Foundation in the First 30 Days

The instinct when you're starting out is to do everything at once — build the website, set up social profiles, write a newsletter, design a logo. Resist it. The first 30 days have one job: lock in five decisions so your marketing actually has something to market. Skip this foundation and you'll stay busy without moving forward.

## Decision 1: Choose One Core Service

You do not need a menu. A menu creates confusion for buyers and spreads your energy thin. Pick the **one service** you can deliver reliably right now, that solves a real problem, and that you'd be comfortable doing for ten different clients in a row. That's your offer for the next 90 days. You can add more later — after you have revenue and feedback.

## Decision 2: Define Your Target Client Precisely

Vague targeting kills momentum. "Small business owners" is not a target. Try this test: could you write a single LinkedIn post aimed directly at this person? If not, go narrower. Useful specifics include their job title or business type, their biggest frustration right now, and what success looks like to them. Example: *e-commerce founders with one to five employees who are drowning in customer emails and need systems, not more software.*

## Decision 3: Write Your One-Sentence Value Proposition

Fill this in:

**I help [specific person] do [specific action] so they can [desired outcome].**

Example: *I help first-time online store owners set up automated customer support so they can stop answering the same emails every morning.*

This sentence goes everywhere — your email signature, your LinkedIn bio, the first line of your intro message. Write it now. You can refine it later.

## Decision 4: Name and Legal Setup

You don't need an LLC on day one in most cases, but you do need to be set up to get paid legally. Here's a simple checklist:

- Choose a business name (your own name works fine)
- Register as a sole proprietor in your state/country if required
- Open a separate bank account for business income
- Note your tax obligations — set aside 25–30% of income from the start

## Decision 5: Your Minimum Viable Tech Stack

Three tools. That's it for now.

1. **Email** — a professional address with your domain (not a Gmail handle)
2. **Invoicing** — a free tool like Wave or similar so you can get paid immediately
3. **Scheduling link** — one calendar link so booking a call takes under 60 seconds

No website required yet. No fancy CRM. Add complexity only when a real problem demands it.

## If You Have No Portfolio Work Yet

Create one proof-of-concept piece. Do a sample project for a fictional client, a mini audit of a real business you admire, or a free session for a friend in your target market in exchange for a testimonial. One concrete example beats a blank portfolio every time.

# Price Yourself to Win (Fill-In Calculator Included)

Most first-time solopreneurs land on a rate one of two ways: they panic-price low because they don't feel "ready," or they Google what competitors charge and pick a number in the middle. Both approaches will hurt you. The first trains clients to see you as budget-tier. The second ignores whether that rate actually keeps your lights on.

Let's fix that with math instead of feelings.

## Step 1: Find Your Floor (The Survival Number)

Your floor rate is the minimum you can charge and still run a real business. Here's how to calculate it.

### Fill in your numbers:

- Monthly personal expenses (rent, food, bills, debt): \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Monthly business expenses (software, insurance, taxes set-aside ~25%): \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- **Total monthly revenue needed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (add both lines)

Now figure out your real working capacity:

- Hours you plan to work per week: \_\_\_\_\_
- Subtract non-billable time (admin, marketing, client calls, learning) — typically 40–50% of your week
- **Weekly billable hours:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Monthly billable hours** (multiply by 4.3): \_\_\_\_\_

Now divide:

> **Total monthly revenue needed ÷ Monthly billable hours = Your Floor Rate**

Example: \$5,000 needed ÷ 40 billable hours = **\$125/hour minimum**. If you were about to charge \$65, you now see why that creates a crisis, not a business.

## Step 2: Layer In Market Reality

Your floor is the bottom. The market sets a ceiling. Research what working professionals (not beginners undercutting everyone) charge in your niche. Your target zone sits between your floor and the mid-market rate — leaning toward mid-market as soon as you have any proof of results.

## Step 3: Shift From Hours to Outcomes

If you're a coach or designer, **package your work around deliverables, not time**. A client doesn't want 10 hours of design — they want a finished brand identity. A coaching client wants a specific transformation. Price the outcome.

Formula: estimate the hours a project takes, multiply by your floor rate, then add 20–30% for scope creep and expertise. That's your project minimum.

## Step 4: Set a Smart Launch Rate

A launch rate is a **temporary, intentional discount** — not a permanent identity. Frame it clearly:

> "My standard rate is \$X. For my first three clients, I'm offering \$Y in exchange for a detailed testimonial."

This protects your positioning while lowering the barrier to yes. Limit it to 2–4 clients, put an end date on it, and honor that date.

## Step 5: Plan Your First Rate Increase

Schedule a rate review at Day 90. If you've delivered results and your calendar has any waitlist pressure, raise rates by 15–25%. You don't need permission. You need a policy: new clients get the new rate, existing clients get 30 days' notice.

# Get Visible Without a Big Audience (Days 31–60)

Here's the honest truth about visibility: your first three to five clients will almost certainly come from people who already know you, not from strangers who found you on social media. This isn't a consolation prize — it's a strategy. Lean into it.

## Relationships Before Followers

Service businesses run on trust, and trust takes time to build with a cold audience. It does *not* take time with a former colleague who already knows your work ethic, a past client who loved what you delivered, or a friend who's been watching you build something. Start there. Every. Single. Time.

The **referral-first mindset** means you treat your existing network as your primary marketing channel for Days 31–60 — not a backup plan.

## Lock Down One Platform Before You Touch Another

Pick one profile and make it airtight before you create anything else.

- **LinkedIn** if you're a coach, consultant, VA, or B2B-facing designer
- **Instagram** if you're a creative, brand designer, or serve consumer-facing clients

Your profile needs three things: a clear one-sentence description of who you help and how, a professional (not necessarily fancy) photo, and a way to contact you or book a call. That's it. Don't start a TikTok, launch a newsletter, or build a website until this is done.

## The Warm Outreach Script

This message works. Adapt the details, but keep the tone casual and specific:

> *"Hey [Name], hope things are going well! I recently launched [what you do] helping [who you help] with [the main result]. I'm taking on a few clients right now and thought of you — either as someone who might benefit or who might know someone who would. No pressure at all, just wanted to put it on your radar. Would love to catch up if you're open to it."*

Send this to 10 people in Week 5. Not 100. Ten, thoughtfully chosen.

## One Piece of Value Content Per Week

You don't need to post daily. You need to post *usefully*. Once a week, share something that demonstrates your thinking:

- A short tip (3 sentences is fine)
- A lesson from a project or past experience
- A question that sparks conversation in your niche
- A quick voice note or video if writing isn't your thing

Consistency here matters more than production quality.

## Ask for Referrals Without the Cringe

After any positive conversation — even an informal one — you can say:

> *"If anyone in your world is looking for help with [thing you do], I'd love an introduction. Even just a text introduction is huge for me right now."*

Specific, low-effort for them, not desperate. That's the formula.

## Find Two Communities Worth Showing Up In

Identify one online community (a Slack group, a LinkedIn group, a niche forum) and one local or virtual networking group where your ideal clients or referral partners gather. Show up consistently — answer questions, be helpful, skip the self-promotion for the first month.

Track every outreach message, post, and community interaction in your Week-by-Week Checklist so you can see what's actually generating momentum when we hit Days 61–90.

# Week-by-Week 90-Day Checklist

## How to Use This Checklist

This checklist runs 13 weeks. Each week takes roughly **3–5 hours** if you're going full-time, or **1.5–2 hours** if you're still in a day job. You do not need to do everything — you need to do the *right* things in order.

**If you're part-time:** Skip the "stretch" items marked with ■. Focus only on the core checkbox items. Progress matters more than perfection.

Print this out, or copy it into a doc. Write in the margins. Cross things off loudly.

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## Weeks 1–4: Build Your Foundation

### Week 1 — Nail Your Offer

- Write one sentence: "I help [specific person] do [specific outcome] in [timeframe]."
- List three problems you can solve that someone would pay money to fix
- Choose one service to lead with (you can add more later)
- Research two competitors to see how they frame their offers

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

### Week 2 — Handle the Legal Basics

- Choose a business name and check availability
- Open a separate business bank account
- Register as a sole proprietor or LLC (check your local requirements)
- Set up a simple invoicing tool (Wave, HoneyBook, or similar)

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

### Week 3 — Set Your Prices

- Complete the pricing calculator from Section 3
- Write out your starter package with a clear name, deliverables, and price
- Decide your payment terms: 50% upfront or paid in full?
- Draft a one-page PDF of your offer you can send via email

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Week 4 — Create One Portfolio Piece**

- Do one sample project (paid, volunteer, or self-initiated — all count)
- Write a 3-sentence case study: problem, what you did, result
- Take or gather one professional-looking photo of yourself

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Month 1 Checkpoint — Three Questions:**

1. Can you explain your service in one sentence without hesitating? Y / N
2. Do you have a price you'd say out loud without apologizing? Y / N
3. Do you have at least one example of your work to show? Y / N

If you answered No to any of these, stay in this phase one more week before moving on.

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### **Weeks 5–8: Get Visible**

#### **Week 5 — Optimize Your Online Profile**

- Update your LinkedIn (or primary platform) headline to reflect your new offer
- Rewrite your bio so it speaks to your target client, not your resume
- Add your portfolio piece or case study to your profile

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Week 6 — Warm Outreach Round One**

- Write a list of 20 people who already know and trust you
- Send 5–10 personal messages this week (not a blast — individual notes)
- Sample message: "Hey [name], I just launched [service]. If you know anyone who [problem you solve], I'd love an intro."

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

### **Week 7 — Post Your First Three Pieces of Content**

- Post #1: Who you help and what problem you solve
- Post #2: One thing you've learned that your audience would find useful
- Post #3: Behind-the-scenes of your work or process
- Engage with 10 posts from potential clients or referral partners

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

### **Week 8 — Warm Outreach Round Two**

- Follow up with anyone who responded positively in Week 6
- Send 5–10 more personal outreach messages
- Ask one person for a referral or testimonial if you've done work together

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

### **Month 2 Checkpoint — Three Questions:**

1. Have you personally contacted at least 15 people about your services? Y / N
2. Have you published at least three pieces of content? Y / N
3. Have you had at least one real conversation about your offer (not just a like or comment)? Y / N

If you answered No to two or more, your priority next week is outreach — not more content.

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## **Weeks 9–12: Land the Client**

## **Week 9 — Book Discovery Calls**

- Set up a simple calendar link (Calendly free tier works fine)
- Reach out to anyone who expressed interest and invite them to a 20-minute call
- Prepare five questions to ask on a discovery call (what's the problem, what have they tried, what would success look like, what's the timeline, what's the budget)

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Week 10 — Send Proposals**

- After each discovery call, send a written proposal within 24 hours
- Proposal template: situation summary, your approach, deliverables, investment, next step
- Include a clear call to action: "Reply with 'yes' and I'll send the contract."
- Create a simple contract template using a free tool like HelloSign or AND.CO

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Week 11 — Follow Up Without Apology**

- Follow up on any open proposals (a simple "checking in" message is fine)
- Send a second outreach wave to your warm contact list
- Book at least two more discovery calls this week

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Week 12 — Close and Deliver**

- Sign your first contract
- Collect your first payment before starting work
- Deliver your work and ask for a short written testimonial when done
- Document your onboarding process so you can repeat it efficiently

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Month 3 Checkpoint — Three Questions:**

1. Have you completed at least three discovery calls? Y / N

2. Have you sent at least two proposals? Y / N
3. Have you collected at least one payment? Y / N

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## **Week 13 (Bonus): Review and Plan Q2**

This week is not about doing — it's about thinking clearly so the next 90 days are faster.

- Write down what worked (lead sources, offers, messages that got replies)
- Write down what didn't (where you stalled, what you avoided, what took too long)
- Fill in this prompt: \*"In the next quarter, I want to earn \$\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_ clients by doing more of \_\_\_\_\_ and less of \_\_\_\_\_."
- Set your three priorities for Weeks 14–26
- Raise your prices by 10–20% before taking your next new client

*My notes for this week:* \_\_\_\_\_

You built something real in 90 days. The checklist gave you the sequence — you did the work. Now you know what your business actually looks like, and that's the only foundation that holds.

# Land Your First Paying Client in Days 61–90

## Run a Discovery Call That Does Double Duty

Your discovery call has one job: figure out if you can genuinely help this person, and let them feel that in real time. When you do it well, the proposal almost writes itself.

Keep the call to 30–45 minutes. Use this sequence:

1. **Open with their situation** — "Tell me what's going on and what made you reach out now." Let them talk for 10 minutes uninterrupted.
2. **Dig into the cost of the problem** — "What happens if this stays the same six months from now?" This isn't manipulation; it's helping them see clearly.
3. **Share your honest read** — Describe what you'd do and why. If you can't help them, say so. Referrals build reputation faster than bad fits.
4. **Close with a next step** — "I'll send over a one-page summary by Thursday. If it looks right, we can move forward from there."

Don't pitch on the call. Summarize and follow up in writing.

## The One-Page Proposal That Closes

Long proposals lose clients. One page, five sections:

- **The Problem** — Two or three sentences mirroring what they told you. If they read this and think "yes, exactly," you've already built trust.
- **The Solution** — What you'll do, briefly. Focus on outcomes, not your process.
- **Deliverables** — A simple list. What they get, by when.
- **Investment** — One clear number. If you offer tiers, cap it at two options.
- **Next Step** — One action. "Sign and return by Friday to lock in your start date."

Send it within 24 hours of the call while you're still fresh in their mind.

## Handle the Three Objections Calmly

**"Your price is too high."** — "I hear you. Can you tell me more about what you were expecting?" Then listen. Often it's a budget mismatch you can solve with a smaller scope, not a discount.

**"The timing isn't right."** — "Totally fair. When would be a better window?" Get a specific date, then put a reminder on your calendar and follow up then.

**"I need to think about it."** — "Of course. What would help you feel confident making a decision?" This surfaces the real concern almost every time.

## Follow Up Without Feeling Pushy

Three touches, spaced out:

- **Day 2 after proposal** — "Just checking this landed okay. Happy to answer any questions."
- **Day 5** — "Wanted to share one quick thought about [specific thing they mentioned on the call] that I think would really help."
- **Day 10** — "I want to be respectful of your time, so this is my last nudge. My schedule has a spot open [date]. Let me know either way."

If silence follows, move on. One non-client is data, not failure.

## Onboard Like a Pro from Day One

Once they say yes, send a welcome email within the hour. Include:

- A warm, specific note about why you're excited to work with them
- The contract link (use a simple e-signature tool)
- Invoice and payment instructions
- What happens next, in plain language

Your contract needs four things at minimum: scope, timeline, payment terms, and what happens if either party needs to exit.

## If Day 90 Arrives Without a Signed Client

Honest triage first. Ask yourself:

- Did I have at least five discovery calls? If not, the pipeline was the problem, not the pitch.
- Did anyone say yes to a call but ghost the proposal? Your proposal needs work.
- Did people love the call but balk at price? Revisit your positioning or offer a smaller entry point.

Extend your runway by 30 days and fix the one thing. Don't rebuild everything.

## Turn Your First Win Into Future Marketing

The week your first client finishes their project, document everything:

- Fill in this prompt: "*[Client type] came to me with [problem]. We [what you did]. The result was [outcome in their words if possible].*"
- Ask for a short testimonial via email — specific is better than glowing.
- Screenshot the moment you got paid if that helps you believe this is real.

That story becomes your homepage, your pitches, and your confidence. One real win, told well, is worth a hundred hypothetical promises.