

The Small Business AI Starter Guide

A practical beginner's roadmap to saving time, strengthening your marketing, and using AI with confidence.

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7 days • 10 ready-to-use prompts • Responsible AI checklist

WELCOME

AI can make business feel a little lighter

You do not need to be a technology expert to start using artificial intelligence. You need a real business goal, a sensible process, and the willingness to test a few small improvements.

This guide is designed for service providers, store owners, event professionals, educators, creators, and other small business owners who want to use AI without losing their personal touch.

What AI can help you do

- Create first drafts of social media posts, email messages, offers, and product descriptions.
- Turn one business idea into a week of content and marketing concepts.
- Organize frequently asked questions, customer inquiries, and routine workflows.
- Brainstorm advertising scripts, visual concepts, and content calendars.
- Summarize non-sensitive information and build checklists or operating procedures.

START WITH ONE CLEAR WIN

Choose one repeated task that takes you 30 minutes or more each week.

Use AI to prepare a draft, review it yourself, then improve the process.

Track time saved and quality before expanding.

STEP 1

Choose the right kind of AI help

Different tools serve different purposes. Tool names and features can change, so always check current pricing, privacy settings, and permissions before adopting one.

Writing & planning

A conversational assistant can help draft messages, structure offers, outline a business plan, or brainstorm ideas.

Graphics & presentation

Design tools can help produce branded flyers, social posts, presentations, and marketing mockups.

Video & audio

Media tools can help develop scripts, short-form video concepts, captions, and voiceovers. Obtain permission for any person's face or voice.

Workflow automation

Automation platforms connect approved apps to route inquiries, create reminders, or move information between systems.

Customer support

A well-configured AI assistant can handle routine questions, but customers should know when they are interacting with AI and have a route to a person.

STEP 2

Create your first useful marketing campaign

Instead of asking AI to “make me a post,” provide context. Strong inputs lead to stronger drafts.

THE SIMPLE 5-PART PROMPT FORMULA

1. Role: Who should AI act as? (e.g., small-business marketing assistant)
2. Audience: Who are you trying to reach?
3. Goal: What should the content accomplish?
4. Voice: What should it sound like?
5. Output: Exactly what format and length do you need?

Example: Promote your business

“Act as a marketing assistant for my [type of business]. My audience is [ideal customer]. My goal is [book consultations / sell a product / grow awareness]. Write three friendly Facebook posts, each under 110 words, with a helpful hook, one clear benefit, and a specific call to action. Avoid exaggerated claims. Ask me for missing facts instead of inventing them.”

Turn one idea into five assets

- One short Facebook post.
- One Instagram caption.
- A 20-second video script.
- Three headline variations for an ad.
- A short follow-up message to interested prospects.

STEP 3

Build a simple automation without losing control

Start with a low-risk workflow. For example, a website form can collect an inquiry, notify you, and send an approved acknowledgement. It should not promise appointments that have not been confirmed.

Example: New inquiry workflow

- A visitor submits a website inquiry or contact form.
- Your system records only the information needed for follow-up.
- You receive an alert with the inquiry details.
- The visitor receives a reviewed acknowledgement with the expected next step.
- You personally review the request and reply or schedule a conversation.

BEFORE YOU AUTOMATE

- Test the workflow with dummy information.
- Check permissions, consent, security, and app integrations.
- Provide a fallback when the automation fails.
- Review results weekly; give a person control of exceptions.

Three good beginner automations

- Contact form → email notification → approved acknowledgement.
- New lead → task on a follow-up list.
- Customer booking request → review queue → manual confirmation.

STEP 4

10 ready-to-use AI prompts

1. Customer profile

“Describe three likely customer groups for my [business] serving [market]. List their needs, objections, and one ethical way to reach each group. Label assumptions.”

2. Social content

“Create a 7-day social media plan for [business] with engaging hooks, post themes, calls to action, and visual ideas. Use a friendly, helpful voice.”

3. Offer description

“Rewrite this service description for clarity and benefits without inventing testimonials, statistics, guarantees, or qualifications: [paste text].”

4. Ad concepts

“Create three ad concepts for [service] targeting [audience]. For each include a headline, 30-word body, visual idea, and clear CTA. Avoid misleading claims.”

5. Short video

“Write a 30-second vertical video script introducing [service], with a 3-second hook, three simple scenes, and a closing CTA.”

6. FAQs

“Draft eight plain-language FAQs for [business] based ONLY on the facts below. Mark anything that needs owner confirmation: [facts].”

7. Follow-up

“Write a kind, concise follow-up message to someone who expressed interest in [service] but has not booked. No pressure tactics.”

8. Email newsletter

“Draft a helpful newsletter for [audience] teaching [topic], with three practical tips and one relevant invitation to learn more.”

9. Workflow map

“Map a simple process for handling [task]. Show trigger, steps, decision points, human review, and failure handling. Do not make external changes.”

10. Weekly review

"Help me review this week's anonymized results: [data]. Identify patterns, uncertainties, and three experiments for next week. Do not invent metrics."

STEP 5

Use AI responsibly: your checklist

- I will not paste private customer records, financial details, passwords, or protected health information into tools without appropriate authorization and safeguards.
- I will check output for accuracy, bias, copyright concerns, and misleading statements before publishing.
- I will not fabricate testimonials, endorsements, reviews, results, or credentials.
- I will seek permission before using someone's likeness, voice, or proprietary materials.
- I will explain AI use when it matters for customer trust and provide human help when needed.
- I will confirm platform rules, applicable laws, and any industry-specific requirements.
- I will review vendor retention, training, data-sharing, and security settings.
- I will track results and correct mistakes promptly.

A helpful rule

AI can support your decisions. It should not replace your judgment, professional obligations, or responsibility to customers. Regulated industries require additional review and safeguards.

YOUR 7-DAY PLAN

Seven days to your first AI win

Day 1

Pick one repetitive business task and write down your current process.

Day 2

Choose an appropriate AI tool and review its privacy and security settings.

Day 3

Use one prompt in this guide to create a first draft.

Day 4

Edit the result to match your brand, verify facts, and publish only if ready.

Day 5

Map one simple workflow that could save you time.

Day 6

Test your process with fake data or a low-risk example.

Day 7

Review quality, time saved, customer impact, and your next improvement.

Your quick scorecard

WRITE DOWN YOUR RESULTS

Task improved: _____

Time before: _____ Time after: _____

What worked: _____

What needed human correction: _____

My next AI experiment: _____

NEXT STEP

Bring your business goals. Let's build your strategy.

AI is most useful when it supports real people and real business goals. Whether you are looking for stronger marketing, creative advertising, an AI receptionist concept, or practical automation, you deserve a solution designed for the way your business actually works.

How Pearls of Wisdom AI Consulting can help

- AI strategy and business visibility consultations.
- Branded AI advertising, creative content, and marketing concepts.
- AI-powered website and customer experience planning.
- Automation and AI assistant workflow design.
- Responsible AI education and implementation guidance.

YOUR INVITATION

Schedule a consultation to discuss one business problem worth solving.

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Educational resource only. Product availability, pricing, applicable rules, and privacy requirements vary. This guide is not legal, financial, cybersecurity, or professional compliance advice.