

# PLAYBOOK

**DO IT & DROP IT**



kevinX ★ PLAYBOOK

## Hi Small Business Owners!

Every small business owner wrestles with the same two questions. What should I be **doing right now**? And what **should I stop** doing before it costs me more time, money, or credibility?

This playbook is built around those two questions.

Most business advice piles on more tactics, more systems, and more distractions. The result is a **cluttered to-do list** and a vague sense that you're always behind. This playbook takes a different approach. It focuses on clarity. **What to commit to. What to cut.** What actually moves your business forward today.

Inside, you'll find a focused set of microlessons. Half are about **action**. They help you focus on what deserves your time and attention. The other half are about **elimination**. They **challenge** the habits, decisions, and assumptions that hold you back.

If you are ready to grow, start by deciding **what to do**. And **what to drop**.

Let's get started.

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## Introduction

Small business owners are not short on advice. They are short on **time**, **focus**, and **margin** for error. When everything feels important, nothing gets done well. The cost is energy, momentum, and growth.

This playbook is not about doing more. It is about **choosing better**. That means getting honest about what creates results and what quietly wastes your time. It means recognizing that doing the wrong thing is just as costly as doing nothing at all.

Most business problems are not fixed by adding complexity. They are fixed by **making sharper decisions**. When you stop chasing distractions and start committing to what works, your business gets lighter, faster, and stronger. That clarity is not a personality trait. **It is a discipline**. It shows up in what you say yes to, what you walk away from, and how fast you move when the path is clear.

This playbook is built around that discipline. Half focuses on **actions worth doing now**. They are simple, direct, and grounded in what drives performance. The other half focuses on the habits, decisions, and assumptions that **need to stop**. Not next quarter. Not once things calm down. Now.

You will not agree with every suggestion. That is the point. **Growth requires friction**. But if you treat this playbook as a lens, not a list, you will see your business more clearly.

The best leaders are not the ones who do everything. They are the ones who **know what to ignore**. That is what this playbook helps you practice.

What **you do next** is everything. What **you stop doing** may matter even more.

## Why These Four Categories Matter

Small business owners don't need more to do. They need clarity on [what's worth doing](#) and [what to stop doing](#) before it does more harm than good.

This playbook focuses on four categories where that clarity makes the biggest difference: [leadership](#), [customer engagement](#), [marketing](#), and [sales](#). These are the areas that quietly shape everything. When they're aligned, the business runs sharper. When they're bloated, neglected, or full of outdated thinking, the drag is real.

This is where bad habits hide. This is where strong decisions [create momentum](#). That's why these four were chosen.

Leadership is where wasted motion starts. Too many business owners stay busy instead of staying focused. They avoid decisions, keep broken processes alive, and mistake effort for progress. Leadership means stepping into the discomfort, not away from it. [Start leading on purpose](#). Stop doing what you've been tolerating just to get through the day.

Customer engagement is where your time gets swallowed. The wrong customers burn hours and morale. The right ones build your reputation and margins. But most businesses never make the hard call. They serve everyone the same way and wonder why they're stretched thin. Start [protecting the customers](#) who matter. Stop trying to please the ones who don't.

Marketing is where you either clarify or confuse. Owners often chase tactics, redesigns, and shiny tools instead of committing to a clear message. Marketing without focus burns time and budget with no return. [Start saying what you stand for](#). Stop hiding behind activity that looks smart but doesn't convert.

Sales is where excuses live or progress starts. Avoiding sales, waiting for referrals, or calling it relationship building is just avoidance in disguise. Sales isn't about being pushy. It's about being present, prepared, and consistent. [Start making the ask](#). Stop pretending someone else is going to drive revenue for you.

These four categories aren't random. They are where small businesses either move forward or stall out. They are where [discipline shows up](#) or doesn't.

This playbook is not about doing everything better. It's about doing fewer things with [more clarity](#) and cutting [what's in the way](#).

That's what makes these four categories essential. This is where you'll find the truth. This is [where change starts](#).



## 1. Leadership: Do It & Drop It

Leadership is not about doing more. It's about choosing better. In a small business, every habit, task, and priority either moves the team forward or drags it down. There is no middle ground.

That's why this playbook starts here. Leadership sets the tone for what gets done — and just as importantly, what gets dropped.

Too many owners stay stuck in routines that feel necessary but solve nothing. They over-manage, under-decide, or hold onto responsibilities they should have let go of years ago. At the same time, they avoid the hard moves that would actually make the business sharper — setting clear standards, cutting dead weight, or making faster decisions when things stall.

These microlessons are built to help you fix that. Each one forces a choice. Step in or step back. Tighten the standard or let it slide. Take full ownership or keep making excuses.

Start leading in a way your team can feel. Stop protecting the habits that keep you stuck.

That's what real leadership looks like. And this is where it begins.

## 10 Things to Do Today for Leadership

Leadership isn't a title. It's not a strategic plan or a quarterly goal. It's what a business owner does every day when nobody is watching. In small businesses, leadership is often the deciding factor between steady growth and slow decline. Yet too many owners put it off as something to refine later.

That's a mistake. Leadership is built in the **moments**, the **conversations**, and the **actions** you take right now.

Here are **ten sharp, doable things** you can do **today** to lead better and earn the trust and energy of those around you.

### 1. Cancel One Meeting That Doesn't Matter

Start leading by valuing people's time, including your own. Today, find one meeting on your calendar that could be replaced by a three-sentence email. Cancel it. Tell your team you're giving them time back because leadership includes clarity, not clutter. Watch their respect grow immediately.

### 2. Ask One Person What You Should Stop Doing

Walk up to a team member and ask, "What's one thing I do as a leader that slows us down or frustrates you?" Let them answer without defense. Then thank them, and if it's valid, stop doing it immediately. Most leaders never ask. You'll stand out by being the one who actually listens.

### 3. Fix One Broken Process With Your Own Hands

Pick a small, annoying task in your business that everyone complains about. Don't delegate it. Fix it. Maybe it's a glitchy spreadsheet, a broken printer, or a tedious form. Solve it yourself and let your team see it. Leadership is action. Sometimes it's as small as a working label maker.



#### 4. Give Credit in Public Without a Script

Today, highlight someone's contribution spontaneously. Not at a scheduled staff meeting. Not with a "team player" email. Say it in the moment when it matters. "This client win wouldn't have happened without Maria catching that error. She saved us." That kind of leadership builds trust that lasts.

#### 5. Take a Silent 10-Minute Walk Before You React

When something frustrates you today — a customer complaint, a staff mistake, a delivery delay — don't shoot back an email. Take a walk. Ten minutes. Silent. No phone. Just move. Let your mind settle. You'll lead better with a cooled-down brain than with a hot keyboard.

#### 6. Ask a Junior Team Member to Lead a Huddle

Hand off a five-minute meeting to someone who's never led one. Give them a topic and let them run it. Not only does this give them confidence, it shows the rest of the team that leadership isn't reserved for titles or tenure. It's available to those who step up.

#### 7. Rewrite One Company Policy to Be More Human

Find a policy, procedure, or email template that sounds like a lawyer wrote it in 1997. Rewrite it today. Make it human. Make it sound like something you'd say out loud to a real person. Great leaders build cultures that talk like people, not policies.

#### 8. Make a Decision You've Been Avoiding

Every small business owner has a decision hanging over them. A hire. A fire. A vendor change. A price increase. Choose one and make the call today. Don't put it off again. Leading means moving. Indecision erodes confidence, yours and everyone else's.

### 9. Eat Lunch With Someone You Don't Usually Talk To

Instead of eating at your desk or with your usual circle, grab lunch with someone outside your leadership bubble. The warehouse guy. The part-time bookkeeper. The new intern. Ask about their work and what could make it better. Leadership grows through unexpected conversations.

### 10. End the Day by Writing One Thank You Note

Not a group email. Not a text. A real, handwritten thank you note to someone who made your day easier. Maybe a customer. Maybe a vendor. Maybe your own assistant. It doesn't matter. What matters is the habit. Leaders who show gratitude keep people loyal.

### Closing

You don't become a better leader by reading more theory or stacking more certifications. You **lead better** by **doing better**. And the best place to start is today.

These ten actions won't transform your business overnight. But they will shift how people see you, how you **see yourself**, and how your **business moves forward**.

Leadership happens in the now. Don't wait for next quarter. Start with **something real**. Then keep going.

## 10 Things to Stop Today for Leadership

Strong leadership is not just about **what you do**. It is also about what you **stop doing**. In small businesses, habits form quickly and quietly. Some of them help. Others hold everything back. The worst part is they often feel normal. Maybe even necessary. But they are not.

**Real leadership** starts with subtraction. You get sharper by removing what no longer works. That includes outdated routines, tired language, vague expectations, and your own excuses. If you want your business to grow, you need to clear space for it to happen. Start by letting **go of the habits** that slow your team down and cloud your decisions.

Here are **ten things** to stop today if you want to lead better.

### 1. **Stop being the loudest voice in the room**

Always having the final word might feel like leadership. It is not. It signals that input is optional and disagreement is unwelcome. Let others speak first. Let silence hang for a moment. Watch what happens when people feel their voice actually matters.

### 2. **Stop ignoring the people you walk past every morning**

You remember to greet clients and visitors. You thank the supplier. But the person who unlocks the door or handles returns hears nothing. This sets a tone. The people closest to the core of your business are often the ones you acknowledge least. That needs to change.

### 3. Stop keeping poor performers around because it feels easier

You already know who does not belong. They are unmotivated, unreliable, or simply not right for the role. You justify keeping them because it would take time to replace them. But the cost of keeping them is paid daily by everyone else. Make the hard decision.

### 4. Stop overexplaining what should be simple

Your team does not need another paragraph. They need clarity. Stop dressing up basic direction in corporate language. Say what you mean. Say it plainly. Then let people go do their work without decoding what you said.

### 5. Stop saying you are available when you are not

Telling people to come to you anytime sounds supportive. It is not. It creates hesitation and unclear boundaries. Offer real help by being specific. Ask what they need. Set a time. Give your full attention. That means more than vague availability ever will.

### 6. Stop taking back work you already assigned

When you jump back in to fix or redo someone else's task, you are not saving time. You are sending a message that their effort is not good enough. Let people finish their work. Give guidance if needed. But stay out of the way long enough for them to grow.

### 7. Stop pretending you are fine when you are not

You are allowed to be uncertain. You are allowed to be tired. Acting like everything is under control when it is not creates a disconnect between you and your team. Be honest without collapsing. Strong leaders are steady, not silent.

## 8. Stop putting off conversations that make you uncomfortable

Someone is underperforming. Someone is out of sync with the culture. You feel it. Everyone else sees it. But you keep delaying the talk because it will be awkward. That delay sends a louder message than the problem itself. Say what needs to be said.

## 9. Stop defending behavior that would not fly from anyone else

That team member who breaks rules, misses deadlines, or undercuts others should not get a pass because they are talented or have been around forever. Letting it go once becomes letting it go always. If you would not accept it from someone new, do not accept it from anyone.

## 10. Stop confusing speed with strength

Quick answers and fast decisions look impressive. But that pace often hides weak thinking. Take your time when it matters. Ask one more question. Sleep on it. Slowing down does not mean losing control. It means leading with discipline.

## Closing

Leadership is not about doing more. It is about **doing the right things** with less noise and more purpose. That often means stopping first. The hardest part is not effort. It is restraint. Most small business owners already work hard. What they lack is space.

These ten habits can be replaced with clarity, trust, and momentum. But only if you stop carrying them forward. **Let them go.** The team will move faster. The business will feel sharper. And you will lead like someone **who is ready** for **what comes next**.

## Wrap-up

Most small businesses don't lack effort. They lack clarity. The difference between progress and plateaus often comes down to one thing — whether the leader is making the right calls or avoiding them.

Leadership is not just what you take on. It's also what you stop defending. Bad systems, bloated priorities, low standards, half-kept promises. These don't fix themselves. They stick around until you decide they don't belong anymore.

Your team is watching what you allow. Your business is reacting to what you ignore.

Start acting on what matters. Stop giving your time and energy to what doesn't. That's how you move from managing problems to actually leading your business forward.

Do it or drop it. The standard is yours to set.

## 2. CUSTOMER: Do It & Drop It

Some customers grow your business. Others drain it. The challenge is knowing which is which and having the discipline to act on that truth.

Customer engagement isn't just about service. It's about choices. Who you respond to first. Who gets your best energy. Who you chase. Who you fire. Most small businesses try to treat everyone equally, but not every customer brings equal value. And not every relationship is worth saving.

This section is about sharpening how you serve. Start doing more of what earns loyalty and creates margin. Stop doing what burns hours, undercuts your team, and lowers your standards.

Engaged customers aren't the loudest ones. They're the ones who come back, refer others, and trust you to deliver. You don't earn that by being everything to everyone. You earn it by being clear about who you serve best and letting go of the rest.

## 10 Things to Do Today for Customers

Customers don't judge your business by your mission statement. They judge it by their most **recent experience** with you. For small business owners, that experience is often shaped in a hallway **conversation**, a **late-night reply**, or how you handle the **smallest detail**.

**Today matters** more than **next month's strategy**. Forget the loyalty program for now. Forget the CRM upgrade. Instead, focus on what you can do in the next eight hours to earn more trust, build more goodwill, and keep customers coming back.

### 1. **Call One Customer You Haven't Spoken to in 90 Days**

Pick someone who hasn't heard from you since the last invoice or purchase. Call with no agenda. Just check in. Ask what they're working on. Ask what's going well and what's not. Listen more than you talk. A business owner who listens without selling is rare. Be the one who surprises them with genuine interest.

### 2. **Watch One Customer Use Your Business**

Don't guess what's working. Don't skim online reviews. Watch a customer interact with your business. In person, over Zoom, or on a screen recording. See what clicks. See where they stall. Watch their body language. Pay attention to what they mutter under their breath. You'll find a moment to improve immediately. That moment matters more than a dozen marketing emails.

### 3. **Fix One Thing That Always Causes Confusion**

Every business has a sticking point. A confusing form. A clunky online checkout. An unanswered question buried deep in the FAQ. Fix one of them today. Not by adding a Band-Aid, but by removing the problem. Ask yourself what would make it stupid simple for the customer. Then do that.



#### 4. Write a Real Thank You Note

Pick one customer who paid you, referred you, or even gave you tough feedback recently. Write them a real thank you note. Not a preprinted card. Not a quick email. A handwritten note with their name, a sentence about something specific they did, and a clear thank you. Mail it today. It will get more attention than your last ten social posts combined.

#### 5. Shadow Your Customer Support or Frontline Team for One Hour

Sit with the person who handles the phones. Watch the inbox. Listen to the live chat. Don't speak. Just observe what customers are actually asking for, complaining about, and praising. You'll quickly see what real customers care about versus what leadership meetings pretend they do. The difference can shape how you lead tomorrow.

#### 6. Ask a Customer Why They Chose You Over Someone Else

Send a one-sentence message to a recent buyer. "What tipped the scales for you when you chose us over other options?" You'll often find the real reason has nothing to do with what you thought made you different. It might be your receptionist's tone. Your speed. A simple phrase in your email. Knowing what really matters helps you double down on it immediately.

#### 7. Make One Customer's Day with an Unexpected Upgrade

Pick a regular customer and give them a little something extra. A better version of the service. A free add-on. A free month. No strings. No explanation needed. Just "we appreciate you." This isn't about generosity. It's about reminding customers that you see them. People remember being noticed. They forget ads.

## 8. Remove One Step from the Buying Process

Buying from you should be easier today than it was yesterday. Find one friction point. A form with too many fields. A second confirmation screen. A follow-up that takes too long. Eliminate it or reduce it today. Every extra step costs you business you never even know you lost.

## 9. Ask One Customer What They Wish You Did Better

Don't wait for a complaint. Reach out to a customer you trust and ask one question: "What do you wish we did better?" Ask it without being defensive. Their answer might sting. That's good. Every business needs better bruises. If the feedback is right, act on it today. If it's not, thank them anyway. Either way, you're leading with openness.

## 10. Reply to One Online Review or Social Mention Personally

Find a review, a tag, or a post that mentions your business. Positive or negative. Reply personally. Not with a template. Use their name. Refer to something specific they said. Even if they were critical, your calm, helpful response can turn a critic into a client.

## Closing

Customers don't owe you loyalty. You **earn it** through how you show up today. That might mean skipping a planning session to answer a real question. It might mean fixing a form instead of tweaking a slogan. Every business **wants more customers**. The smart ones realize the fastest way to get there is by taking better care of the ones they already have.

Do something today that leaves a customer **better off**. It costs less than you think and delivers more than you expect. And it builds the kind of **business customers want to stay** with, even when the competition comes knocking.

## 10 Things to Stop Today for Customers

Customers do not leave because of one major failure. They leave because of small **habits that chip away at trust**. Delays. Excuses. Confusing answers. A tone that feels off. **It all adds up**. And the longer those habits stay in place, the more difficult it becomes to recover the relationship.

This is not about being perfect. It is about **being present**, **responsive**, and **human**. Every time a customer interacts with your business, they are asking themselves one question. Do I want to keep coming back here? The answer depends on how you behave today.

Here are ten habits to **stop now** if you want to improve how customers feel about doing business with you.

### 1. **Stop overpromising just to close the deal**

Telling a customer what they want to hear can feel like good salesmanship. It is not. It is a short-term win with a long-term cost. If you say yes to everything, they will hold you to it. And when the product arrives late, or the results fall short, their disappointment will not be quiet. You lose trust, and you often lose the customer. If you cannot deliver what they ask, be honest. If the timeline is tight, tell them. A clear no earns more credibility than a hopeful maybe that falls apart later.

### 2. **Stop hiding behind policy when the real answer is no**

Saying something is against company policy can be useful when it is true. But when it is just a way to avoid an uncomfortable conversation, it creates frustration. Customers want honesty, not excuses. If you cannot refund something, explain why in plain terms. If you will not make an exception, own the decision.

### 3. Stop writing long replies when they asked a simple question

A customer asks if you carry a specific part. You respond with four paragraphs of product philosophy. They stop reading. Customers ask short questions because they want short answers. They are not looking for depth. They are looking for clarity. If you need to explain something in more detail, fine. But start with a direct answer to their question. Then offer to explain further if they are interested. Respect their time. Be direct.

### 4. Stop saying yes when the answer should be later or not now

Every business wants to say yes to customers. That is natural. But saying yes when the answer should be no leads to bad work and worse relationships. If the team is too busy, say so. If you are not the right fit, say that too. Customers value businesses that know what they can handle and protect their standards. Saying yes to everything might keep you busy. It will not keep you respected.

### 5. Stop making the customer repeat themselves

One of the fastest ways to lose a customer's patience is to make them explain the same thing twice. If they call, email, and then have to start over with someone new, they will assume you are not listening. And they will be right. Set up better internal notes. Share context. Prep your team before a handoff. When a customer feels heard the first time, they are more likely to stay with you the next time.

### 6. Stop using the customer's first name too much

Personalization is good. Overdoing it is not. If every sentence starts with the customer's name, it starts to feel like a script. Real conversations do not sound like that. Respect matters more than repetition. Speak like a person. Write like you talk. That feels genuine. That builds trust.

## 7. Stop defending a mistake before you fix it

Things go wrong. That is not the problem. The problem is when the first thing the customer hears is a list of reasons why it was not your fault. Do not lead with your defense. Lead with a fix. Apologize. Solve the issue. Then, if appropriate, explain what happened. Customers care more about resolution than explanation. Fix it first. Talk later.

## 8. Stop making them guess what happens next

After they sign the contract. After they place the order. After they call support. The customer should never have to wonder what the next step is. Every transition should come with clear expectations. Who will contact them. When it will happen. What to prepare. Spell it out. Clear communication builds confidence. Silence creates confusion.

## 9. Stop treating every customer like a transaction

Some customers want a quick purchase and nothing more. Others want a relationship. You do not need to guess who is who. Just treat all of them like they matter. Acknowledge them. Thank them. Ask how things went. Make eye contact if in person. Respond promptly if online. These are not complicated gestures. But they separate businesses that customers tolerate from those they recommend.

## 10. Stop assuming no response means satisfaction

A customer who does not complain is not the same as a happy customer. Silence does not always mean approval. It often means indifference. Or worse, quiet disappointment. Follow up. Ask how the service was. Ask what could have been better. Be ready to hear things you do not want to hear. That is how you improve. And that is how you keep customers from quietly walking away.

## Closing

If you want better customers, start acting like a business that earns them. That means tightening how you communicate, following up faster, setting clear expectations, and delivering on what you say not just when it's easy, but when it's uncomfortable.

And just as important, stop wasting time on customers who will never value any of that. Stop overexplaining, over-servicing, and over-apologizing for doing things right. Those habits drain the team, confuse your priorities, and keep you stuck in reactive mode.

Start reinforcing the behaviors you want more of. Stop protecting the ones that slow you down.

Great customer engagement isn't about being nice. It's about being clear about who you are, how you work, and who gets your best.

### 3. MARKETING: Do It & Drop It

Marketing is not a creative exercise. It is a discipline of choices. What message you lead with. What customers you speak to. What channels you use. And what you stop doing once it becomes noise.

Most small businesses stay busy with marketing but never get traction. They launch campaigns with no plan. They post content without a message. They chase attention instead of earning trust. The problem is not effort. It is focus.

That's why this section exists. You don't need more tools or platforms. You need to get ruthless about what earns attention and what wastes it.

Start saying one clear thing that matters. Start speaking to people who are already looking for a solution like yours. Start aligning your message with your offer, so marketing becomes a path to sales, not a distraction from it.

And stop doing marketing that looks good but leads nowhere. Stop broadcasting to everyone. Stop spending money on campaigns no one owns. Stop confusing motion with results.

Marketing works when it is a reflection of real clarity. That only happens when the business owner stops guessing and starts deciding.



## 10 Things to Do Today for Marketing

Marketing should not be a **mysterious department** or a future investment. For a small business, marketing is what you do right now to get more of the right people to **notice**, **trust**, and **choose** you. It is how you stay top of mind and top of market.

Most owners delay marketing with the excuse of not having time, money, or the right person. But the truth is, you can move your marketing forward in a **meaningful way today**. Not next week. Not next quarter. Today.

Here are ten things you can do in the next few hours to **sharpen** your message, **attract** more business, and **grow** your visibility.

### 1. Rewrite the First Sentence on Your Website

The first line of your homepage is your opening pitch. Is it clear? Does it tell a stranger what you do and who it's for? Or does it start with vague fluff about excellence and innovation? Rewrite it today. Make it unmistakably clear what your business solves and for whom. Think like a customer seeing you for the first time.

### 2. Turn a Customer Question Into a Social Post

Customers ask the best marketing questions. What does it cost? What's the difference between packages? How long does it take? Pick one real question and turn it into a short, clear post. Post it today on the platform your customers actually use. It's real, it's useful, and it shows you listen.

### 3. Add a Call to Action to One Page That Has None

Find one page on your website that gets traffic but asks nothing of the visitor. No form. No offer. No next step. Add a simple call to action today. Tell the visitor what to do next. Even a line like "Schedule a 10-minute call" or "See how we work" makes the page work harder for you.



#### 4. Update One Listing You Forgot About

When was the last time you checked your Yelp page? Your Google Business profile? A trade directory? Find one listing for your business and update it. Add a better photo. Replace old hours. Refresh the description. Customers look for signals of life. Give them one.

#### 5. Send a Useful Tip to Your Email List

If you have an email list, send them something today. Not a pitch. Not a newsletter. A tip. A quick piece of advice they can use without buying anything. No design needed. Just a few sentences that solve a problem or save them time. The more helpful you are, the more likely they are to buy when they are ready.

#### 6. Make One Offer Feel Urgent Without Feeling Pushy

Pick one of your products or services and give it a reason to act now. Maybe it's a limited number of slots. Maybe it's a bonus for signing up this week. Add urgency without gimmicks. Then post it or send it to a segment of your audience today. Action happens when people feel time matters.

#### 7. Record a 60-Second Video Explaining What You Do

Use your phone. Keep it simple. In 60 seconds, explain what your business does, who it helps, and how it works. Speak like you would to a friend. Post it on your website, social feed, or LinkedIn profile today. People buy from people. And they buy faster when they can hear and see you.

## 8. Ask Three Customers Why They Chose You

Reach out to three current customers and ask one question: “What made you choose us?” Use their answers to sharpen your message. Their words are better than yours because they come from the buyer’s brain. Marketing improves instantly when it uses the customer’s language, not your brochure.

## 9. Create a Simple Before and After Story

Pick one customer and write out what their life or business was like before using your service, and what changed after. Keep it short. Make it real. This is not a case study. It’s a story. “Before, they were overwhelmed. Now they are organized and profitable.” Stories like this are stronger than stats. Share it today.

## 10. Remove One Buzzword From Your Materials

Find a brochure, homepage, or one-pager that uses words like “solutions,” “synergy,” or “cutting-edge.” Replace those words with plain language. Real customers speak simply. Your materials should too. Today, be the business that sounds human.

## Closing

Marketing is not a department. It is a daily act of **communication**. It happens every time someone hears your name, lands on your site, or sees your reply to a comment.

You do not need a rebrand or a massive campaign to get **results**. Just **consistency**, **clarity**, and **action**.

And the best time to take that action is today. You already have a story worth telling and a customer worth reaching. Start there. **Keep it real**. Make it easy to choose you. And above all, **keep moving**.

## 10 Things to Stop Today for Marketing

Marketing is supposed to **attract the right people**, make your message clear, and give potential buyers a reason to act. But for many small business owners, marketing becomes a source of noise, confusion, and frustration. What starts as **an effort to grow the business** turns into a collection of half-finished ideas, empty promises, and scattered tactics.

If you want better marketing results, stop doing what gets ignored. Good marketing is not about adding more. It is about **removing what clutters the message** and wastes your time. The real wins come when you simplify, clarify, and stop pretending bad habits are normal.

Here are ten things to **stop doing today** if you want your marketing to start working better right away.

### 1. **Stop talking about yourself first**

When someone lands on your website or reads your post, they do not care how long you have been in business or how passionate you are. They want to know what you can do for them. If your homepage starts with “we,” rewrite it. If your social post leads with your mission statement, cut it. Begin every message with the problem you solve and the benefit they will see.

### 2. **Stop using language your customers do not use**

If your materials are full of industry terms, internal acronyms, or clever slogans that nobody understands, you are losing attention fast. Real customers speak in plain words. Use theirs, not yours. If they say “tax help,” do not say “financial optimization.” If they say “fix my roof,” do not say “comprehensive exterior solutions.” Talk like a human being, not a brand consultant.

### 3. Stop being active on platforms your customers ignore

Just because everyone says you need to be on social media does not mean every platform is worth your time. If your customers are not scrolling Instagram, stop spending an hour a day posting there. If they do not check LinkedIn, stop pushing content there just to feel professional. Focus where your customers actually look. One platform done well is better than four done badly.

### 4. Stop chasing trends that do not fit your business

You do not need a podcast. You do not need to go viral. You do not need to start dancing on TikTok unless that genuinely makes sense for your audience. Trends come and go. Your brand should not follow every one of them. What matters more is consistency, clarity, and showing up in a way that matches your values and your buyers.

### 5. Stop using stock photos that look fake

People know when a photo is real and when it is staged. That shiny smiling team shaking hands in perfect lighting does not look like your business. It looks like every other template. Show your real team. Show your real space. Use photos that feel honest, not generic. Trust increases when your business looks like something people can actually visit.

### 6. Stop offering everything to everyone

If your marketing says you serve individuals, families, startups, corporations, and nonprofits, you are serving confusion. Be specific. Focus on your real audience. Speak directly to the people you help best. Marketing that tries to include everyone usually lands with no one.

## 7. Stop running campaigns without a clear next step

You post a great video. You send a nice email. You share a thoughtful blog post. Then what? If your content does not include a call to action, it is a dead end. Stop assuming people will know what to do. Tell them clearly. Book a call. Visit the page. Download the guide. Without direction, attention disappears.

## 8. Stop measuring likes and views as signs of success

A post with five likes that brings in a good client is more valuable than one with five thousand views that leads to nothing. Vanity metrics are not business metrics. Track what actually moves the business forward. Leads. Sales. Referrals. Time spent with your brand. Anything else is just noise.

## 9. Stop outsourcing your voice

Hiring help for marketing is smart. But letting others write every word without your input is not. Your tone matters. Your point of view matters. If your marketing does not sound like you, it will feel off. Work with people who can translate your voice, not replace it. Customers respond to clarity and consistency, not marketing speak.

## 10. Stop waiting for perfect before you publish

That blog post you keep tweaking. That video you keep re-recording. That campaign you keep postponing until the design is better. Stop waiting. Publish it. Post it. Send it. Marketing improves through action, not perfection. Small business owners lose months chasing polish that their audience never asked for.

## Closing

Most small business marketing is noise pretending to be effort. It fills space, eats time, and produces nothing measurable. You don't need more reach. You need more relevance.

If your message is clear, consistent, and aimed at the right people, do more of it. Keep it simple. Keep it visible. Keep it moving people toward a decision.

If it's not working, stop defending it. Stop posting just to be active. Stop spending money on ads you're not following up on. Stop hiding behind vague branding when you should be making a clear offer.

Start saying one thing that matters. Stop saying everything just to feel busy.

Marketing isn't a branding exercise. It's a series of decisions. This works, keep it. This doesn't, cut it.

Do it or drop it. That's the standard now.

## 4. SALES: Do It & Drop It

Sales is not a mystery. It's a decision.

Every day you either move the business forward by selling — or you don't. There's no in-between. Yet most small business owners avoid sales, delay it, or hide from it by calling it something else. Relationship building. Outreach. Networking. Anything but what it is.

That avoidance has a cost. If you won't ask clearly, follow up consistently, and close confidently, the business stays stuck.

This section is not about sales strategies. It's about action. Start doing what creates revenue. Pick up the phone. Make the ask. Get the next meeting. Own the process.

And stop doing what makes you feel busy but produces nothing. Stop talking in circles. Stop pitching to people who aren't ready. Stop telling yourself you're not a salesperson.

You don't have to love sales. You just have to stop avoiding it. Do the things that move deals forward. Drop the habits that let you off the hook.

## 10 Things to Do Today for Sales

Sales is not about **pressure**, **persuasion**, or **personality**. It is about understanding what the customer truly needs and making it easier for them to act.

For small business owners, sales is often the **most avoided responsibility**. They call it relationship building. They call it growth. They call it **anything but selling**. But no revenue means no business. If you want more sales, stop worrying about being perfect and start doing things that get results.

These ten actions are **simple**, doable **today**, and **effective** for one reason, they remove friction and create momentum.

### 1. Follow Up With One Lead Who Went Quiet

Pick one person who ghosted you after a proposal, a call, or a quote. Send them a short, friendly follow-up. No pressure. Just a check-in. Say something like, “Still thinking about working together? Let me know if the timing isn’t right or if you need anything else.” People are busy, not rude. Be the one who circles back without sounding desperate.

### 2. Shorten One Sales Email by 50 Percent

Find a sales email you’ve sent before. Cut it in half. Get to the point faster. Make the benefit clear in the first two lines. Nobody has time for buildup. Then send the updated version to one new prospect today. Track what happens. The right words take up less space.



### 3. Ask for One Specific Referral From a Happy Customer

Do not say “Let me know if you know anyone.” That goes nowhere. Instead, ask a happy client, “Do you know one other business that might be struggling with the same problem we solved for you?” The more specific you are, the easier it is to refer. Make it easy, and people will help you.

### 4. Revisit One Old Quote and Offer a Fresh Option

Dig up a proposal that was never accepted. Rewrite it with a simpler or smaller version of your offer. Call it a test project or starter plan. Send it with this line: “I’ve been thinking about how we could start small and build up from there. Would this make it easier to get going?” It’s easier to close a foot in the door than a full package.

### 5. Record a Personal Video Message for a Prospect

Instead of another long email, record a short video using your phone or screen recorder. Address the person by name. Mention something specific to them. Keep it under 90 seconds. Send it directly. Most people have never received a personalized business video. That is exactly why it works.

### 6. Update Your Sales Page With One Clear Benefit

Look at your product or service page. If the first thing a visitor sees is about you, rewrite it. Make the first benefit about them. What do they get? What problem gets solved? Do this today. You are not the hero of the sale. The customer is.

## 7. Roleplay Your Pitch With a Colleague or Friend

Take ten minutes and have someone pretend to be a potential buyer. Go through your pitch. Have them ask questions or raise objections. Then switch roles. See how it feels on the other side. It is awkward and uncomfortable, which is why you should do it. It sharpens your language and your delivery immediately.

## 8. Offer a Fast Action Bonus to One Prospect

Reach out to a prospect who is on the fence and say this: “If you’re ready to move forward this week, I can include [bonus].” The bonus should be useful, limited, and not discount-based. Maybe it is a setup call, a guide, or a tool. You are not giving away value. You are creating a reason to act now.

## 9. Ask a Buyer What Almost Made Them Say No

Find a recent buyer and ask this simple question: “What was the one thing that almost kept you from saying yes?” Listen carefully. Whatever they say, fix it or reframe it in your next pitch. Small changes to how you address hesitation can turn near-misses into deals.

## 10. Write Down Three Problems You Actually Solve

Sales is not about features. It is about problems you make go away. Today, write down three problems your ideal buyer is dealing with. Then write how you solve each one in a single sentence. These are your talking points. Use them in your next call, email, or pitch. Prospects respond to solutions, not jargon.

## Closing

Sales is a **conversation**, not a campaign. You do not need a new tool, a new hire, or a new pitch deck. You need **motion**. You need clarity. You need to **reach out**, **follow up**, **adjust**, and **try again**.

These actions may not lead to ten closed deals today, but they will **move you forward**. Every sale is earned through **momentum**. Take one step, then the next.

Keep **showing up**. Keep **solving real problems**. The best small business sellers are not pushy. They are present. **Be one of them**.

## 10 Things to Stop Today for Sales

Sales problems often come **disguised as effort**. You follow up. You write long emails. You explain the offer again. You tweak the price. You keep chasing the deal. And still, nothing moves. The issue is not always what you are not doing. It is often what **you refuse to stop**.

Small business owners pick up a lot of sales habits out of **fear or habit**. These behaviors feel normal, maybe even necessary. But they are usually just noise. They waste time, confuse the buyer, and make you look **less confident** than you are.

If your sales process feels stuck, cluttered, or exhausting, the first fix is to **remove what is slowing it down**. Start with these ten habits. Each one is costing you trust, time, or revenue. The moment you stop doing them, you will start seeing better results.

Start by stopping the **ten habits** below.

### 1. **Stop talking the moment someone shows interest**

You are in a conversation. The prospect nods. They seem ready to buy. So you keep talking. You add details. You repeat the benefits. You explain more. And just like that, the momentum disappears. Stop doing that. When someone signals interest, ask a closing question. Would you like to move forward? Can I send the agreement today? Silence is not your enemy. Overexplaining is.

### 2. **Stop guessing what the buyer values**

You assume they want speed. They care about price. They need more features. But you never actually asked. Stop assuming. Ask the buyer what matters most. Is it budget? Is it turnaround time? Is it ongoing support? When you know what they value, you can align your pitch instead of guessing your way to a no.

### 3. Stop selling to everyone who asks

Not every lead is a fit. Some will waste your time. Others will drain your energy. And a few will cost more to serve than they ever pay you. Stop saying yes to every inquiry. Start qualifying. Ask better questions. If someone is not ready or not a match, point them somewhere else. The fastest way to close more deals is to stop chasing the wrong ones.

### 4. Stop talking more than the buyer

Sales is not a monologue. It is a dialogue. If you are talking for most of the call or meeting, you are not learning anything. Stop filling the silence. Ask a question and wait. Let the buyer speak. People trust the person who listens, not the one who dominates the conversation.

### 5. Stop relying on your proposal to do the selling

You send a great pitch. It is clear, polished, and persuasive. But then you just wait. That is not a sales strategy. That is a document. Stop treating the proposal as the close. It is just a tool. Selling still requires follow-up, conversation, and clarity. Always follow a proposal with a conversation, not a countdown.

### 6. Stop lowering your price just to win the deal

Discounts feel like momentum. But they usually signal desperation. If your first response to resistance is to cut the price, you train the buyer to expect it again. Instead, hold the line. Reframe the value. Offer a smaller option if needed, but keep your pricing structure intact. People respect the business that respects itself.

## 7. Stop apologizing for being in sales

You are not bothering someone by trying to solve their problem. Stop saying things like “I know you are busy, but” or “I hate to follow up again.” Own your role. If what you are offering is valuable, then reaching out is not an interruption. It is a service. Confidence creates clarity. Apology creates doubt.

## 8. Stop waiting too long to follow up

You had a good call. The buyer said they would think about it. So you wait a week. Then two. Then it feels too late. Stop doing that. Follow up within a reasonable window. A couple of days is usually right. Ask if they have any questions. Offer to help them decide. Polite persistence beats passive silence.

## 9. Stop burying the call to action

A sales conversation should have a clear next step. If the buyer has to figure it out for themselves, you have already lost momentum. Do not assume they will ask for a contract. Do not assume they will schedule a demo. Say exactly what happens next. Then ask if that sounds good to them. Be direct. Not pushy. Just clear.

## 10. Stop chasing leads who have already said no

You had a shot. You gave it your best. They passed. Let it go. Spending time on leads that are not interested only keeps you from finding the ones who are. Set a reminder to check in months later if you want. But stop emailing every week hoping something has changed. Respect their answer. Respect your time.

## Closing

There's only one reason to avoid sales, fear. Fear of rejection. Fear of sounding pushy. Fear of hearing no.

And that fear is costing you growth.

Sales doesn't require a script or a strategy deck. It requires action. Start doing what works. Make the call. Ask the question. Send the follow-up. Show up with urgency and clarity. That's how deals get closed.

And stop wasting time on false signals. Stop counting clicks, likes, and polite interest. Stop sitting on leads you haven't followed up on. Stop waiting for the sale to happen on its own.

If it moves revenue forward, do it. If it keeps you stuck in hesitation, drop it.

Selling isn't about being perfect. It's about being present and consistent. Decide what matters, act on it, and let go of everything else.

Do it & drop it. That includes how you sell.

## Do It & Drop It is a Whole-Business Responsibility

This isn't about being more productive. It's about being **more decisive**.

Every problem in your business leaves a trail. That trail ends at a decision, one you've made, one you've delayed, or one you've avoided completely. This playbook is about **facing those decisions** and **making them count**.

If **something works**, do more of it. If **it doesn't**, stop pretending it will.

That's how you lead better. That's how you grow faster. Not by adding complexity, but by **removing everything** that **slows you down**.

Do it & drop it. That's not a slogan. That's how a **small business moves forward**. One clear decision at a time.



## Running a small business shouldn't feel like guesswork...

kevinX helps you cut through the noise with clear answers to real problems like growing sales, leading teams, and staying focused on what matters most.

Smart content. Real tools. Built for how small business really works. By small business owners.

- ♦ **Microlessons:** 400+ short, focused learning courses, neatly curated into four categories: CUSTOMERS, LEADERSHIP, MARKETING, and SALES.
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If you're ready to lead better and grow faster, kevinX is your edge.

### Note from the Author

Hi, I've spent over 20 years starting and growing small businesses, from a fly fishing membership club to a fractional sales & marketing firm for fintechs.

That journey taught me how vital customer engagement, leadership, marketing, and sales are, and how small business owners often need to handle it all.

kevinX is built from my own wins and mistakes. I created, tested, and used every part of it myself.

Build boldly. Lead smart. Own every win. Your business, your way.

Keep leading, keep selling.

Kevin Adams

kevinX