

 The Plug AI

The Small Business AI Playbook

Marketing, customer service, and back-office work —
handled with free AI tools, so you can run your
business without hiring a team.

"Get Connected. Get Skilled. Get into AI."

Free from The Plug AI · Built for owners doing it all themselves

The Big Idea

Big companies have marketing departments, customer service teams, and bookkeepers. You have you. AI doesn't replace what makes your business special — it handles the typing, drafting, and formatting so your hours go where they matter: your customers and your craft.

Everything in this playbook uses free tiers. Start with one chapter — whichever pain is biggest — and add the rest as habits form.

Chapter 1: Marketing Without a Marketing Team

Social media in 20 minutes a week

THE BATCH PROMPT

"I run [business type] in [city]. Write 7 Instagram captions for this week: 2 about [product/service], 2 tips my customers would find useful, 1 behind-the-scenes, 1 customer-appreciation, 1 fun/personality post. Keep my voice: [friendly / bold / warm]."

Generate a week of captions in one sitting, drop them into Canva templates for graphics, and schedule them with Meta's free Business Suite.

Your Google presence

THE REVIEW REPLY

"Write a short, warm reply to this customer review of my business: [paste review]. If it's negative, be gracious, take responsibility where fair, and invite them to contact me directly."

Free win: businesses that reply to every review look alive and cared-for. AI makes 'every review' take five minutes a week.

Chapter 2: Customer Communication

THE FAQ BUILDER

"Here are the 10 questions customers ask me most, with my usual answers: [list them]. Rewrite them into a clear, friendly FAQ I can post on my website and print for my counter."

THE HARD CONVERSATION

"A customer is unhappy because [situation]. Write a response that is empathetic and professional, offers [what you can offer], and protects my business without sounding defensive."

THE NO-SHOW POLICY

"Write a friendly but firm message about my [deposit / cancellation / no-show] policy that I can send when booking appointments."

Chapter 3: The Back Office

Money basics

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NUMBERS

"Here are my monthly numbers: revenue [\$X], supplies [\$X], rent [\$X], other costs [list]. Explain my profit margin in plain English and suggest the two most impactful things to improve it."

For actual bookkeeping, Wave (waveapps.com) is free and its AI auto-categorizes expenses. Ask ChatGPT to explain anything on a report you don't understand.

Documents and admin

THE SERVICE AGREEMENT

"Draft a simple service agreement for [service] covering scope, payment terms, timelines, and cancellations. I'll have a professional review it before use."

Rule: AI drafts contracts; a human professional reviews anything you'll actually sign. Draft-then-review is dramatically cheaper than draft-from-scratch.

Chapter 4: Growing the Business

THE COMPETITOR SCAN

(In Perplexity) "What do customers say in reviews about [competitor type] businesses in [city]? What do people complain about most?" — then be the business that fixes those complaints.

THE NEW OFFER

"My customers love [what sells best]. Suggest 5 add-on products or services I could offer with little extra cost, and how to price each."

THE EMAIL LIST

"Write a monthly email newsletter for my customers: one update about [business], one seasonal tip, one gentle promotion for [offer]. Warm, short, no hard sell."

Your Weekly AI Routine (45 minutes total)

Day	Task	Time
Monday	Batch the week's social posts (Chapter 1 prompt)	20 min
Wednesday	Reply to all reviews and pending customer messages	10 min
Friday	Check the numbers; ask AI to explain anything odd	10 min
Monthly	Send the newsletter; review what sold best and ask AI for one improvement idea	+15 min

The Free Toolbox

- **ChatGPT / Claude** — writing, planning, analysis (free tiers)
- **Canva** — graphics, menus, flyers, logos (free tier)
- **Meta Business Suite** — schedule Facebook/Instagram posts (free)
- **Wave** — invoicing and bookkeeping (free)
- **Perplexity** — market and competitor research with sources (free)
- **Google Business Profile** — show up on Maps and Search (free)