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EBOOK

Start Your Small Business in Nigeria

A practical 30-day plan from idea to first paying customers

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For Nigerian small businesses

Start Your Small Business in Nigeria
A practical 30-day plan from idea to first paying customers

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Before you start: what this book is (and isn't)

This book is for one kind of reader: someone in Nigeria who wants to start a small business **this month**, with limited money, and who would rather learn by doing than by reading theory.

It is not a book about raising millions from investors or building the next big tech company. It is about the businesses that actually feed families and employ people: the caterer, the phone repairer, the tailor, the POS agent, the cleaner, the online seller, the tutor, the event decorator, the small-scale farmer, the freelancer.

You will get the most from it if you:

- **Read one chapter, then act.** Every chapter ends with a short "Do this today" list. Do it before you read on.
- **Keep a notebook** (paper or phone). You will write down numbers, names and answers — they become your business plan without you noticing.
- **Use real numbers.** Guesses are fine at first, but replace them with real prices from the market as soon as you can.

> 💡 **TIP**
>
> The biggest risk for a new business is not competition or the economy. It is spending all your money before you know whether people will pay. This whole book is built around one idea: **prove that people will pay, cheaply, before you spend big.**

CHAPTER 1

Choose an idea you can actually run

Most people pick a business because it looks profitable from the outside. A better question is: *which business can I run well, with what I already have?*

The three-circle test

Draw three circles and write in each:

1. **What I can do or learn quickly** — skills you have (cooking, driving, fixing phones, design, teaching, selling) or can learn within a month.
2. **What people around me already pay for** — look at your street, estate, office, church, mosque, school, market and WhatsApp groups. What do people spend money on every week?
3. **What I can start with the money I have** — be honest. ₦50,000? ₦300,000? ₦1 million?

Good ideas sit where the three circles overlap. An idea that needs ₦5 million when you have ₦200,000 is not a bad idea — it is a *later* idea.

Five quick filters

Score each idea from 1 (poor) to 5 (great):

Question	What a "5" looks like
How often do customers buy?	Every day or every week (food, airtime, laundry, transport)
How fast do I get paid?	Paid before or on delivery, not "next month"
How much can I start with?	Can start small and grow step by step
Can I reach customers cheaply?	Customers are near me or on platforms I already use
Can I do it well?	I have the skill, or can learn it in weeks

Add up the score. Anything above 18 out of 25 is worth testing. Below 12, put it aside for now.

📘 **EXAMPLE**

Amaka's options. Amaka works in an office in Ikeja and has ₦250,000 saved. She is considering (a) importing wigs, (b) selling lunch packs to colleagues, (c) opening a boutique. Lunch packs score 21: people buy daily, they pay on delivery, ₦60,000 is enough to start, her customers sit next to her, and she cooks well. The boutique scores 11 — it needs rent, stock and months to break even. She tests lunch packs first.

Do this today

- Write down three business ideas.

- Score each one with the five filters.
- Choose the top one to test this week.

CHAPTER 2

Test demand before you spend

Before you print a banner, rent a shop or buy stock in bulk, find out whether real people will pay real money. This is called *validating* the idea, and it can be done in a week.

The "pre-sale" method

The strongest proof of demand is money in your hand. Try to get your first customers to **pay before you have fully built the business**:

- A caterer takes five orders for Friday and only buys ingredients after the orders are paid.
- A tutor collects the first month's fees from three parents before printing anything.
- An online seller posts photos of samples, takes deposits, then buys stock to match the orders.

If nobody will pay in advance, ask why. The answers are gold: wrong price, wrong product, wrong customer, or you have not explained it well.

Conversations, not surveys

Talk to at least **ten people who could be customers**. Don't ask "Would you buy this?" — people are polite and will say yes. Ask about what they already do:

- "Where do you buy this now? How much do you pay?"
- "What annoys you about it?"
- "When did you last buy it?"
- "If someone solved that problem, what would it be worth to you?"

Write down the exact words people use. You will reuse them later in your adverts and WhatsApp status posts.

Measure what matters

At the end of the test week, write down:

End of the free sample

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