

LIZZYLAND

The DIY Marketing Plan

No agency required. Social media basics, free tools, and a one-page plan you'll actually use.

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• First, The Reframe •

You Don't Need An Agency. You Need A Plan.

Marketing feels enormous because most advice is written for people with a marketing budget. You don't have one yet, and you don't need one to start. You need one platform, a bit of consistency, and something worth telling people about — which, if you've made it this far, you already have.

This isn't a course. It's the actual minimum that works.

Before Anything Else: Get The Foundations Right

Four things need to exist before you post a single thing. Do them in this order.

Step 1 — Name It Right

Short and catchy, or — especially for services — built around your location. "Sarah's Nails Durban" beats "Ethereal Beauty Collective" every time someone's actually searching for a nail tech nearby. A bad name doesn't just underperform, it can genuinely break you: hard to say, hard to spell, hard to find, or carrying a meaning you didn't intend.

One hard rule: never use a negative word in your branding, even meant positively. "Reckless," "Broke," "Chaos" — however ironic or fun it feels while naming it, that's the word that shows up in searches, reviews, and conversations about you forever. Choose language that works for you, not against you.

Step 2 — Build The Visual Kit

You need three image assets, not one. AI logo tools make this genuinely free now — Canva's free logo maker, or asking an AI image tool directly — no need to commission anything just to get started.

- A square logo that still reads clearly cropped into a circle — most profile pictures crop to a circle, and any text or detail that touches the edge gets cut off. Test the circle crop before you finalise it.
- A banner image (Facebook cover, LinkedIn banner, YouTube channel art) — this is prime real estate for your motto or a line about what you do, themed in your brand colours. Don't waste it on a repeated logo.
- A rectangular version for letterheads and business communication — quotes, invoices, email signatures. Different proportions to the banner, built for print and documents rather than a screen.

Step 3 — Claim Your Profiles

Set up the business email address first — even a free Gmail with your business name beats using your personal one for enquiries — then claim your handle on every platform you might eventually use, even the ones you're not posting on yet. A held-but-empty handle is better than someone else getting your name first. Update every portfolio, bio, and old profile that still points to the wrong thing.

Step 4 — Get Found Locally

If you offer a physical service or have a location — a BnB, a studio, a shop, anything customers travel to — set up a free Google Business Profile immediately. It puts you on the map, literally, and it's one of the highest-value free things available to a small business. This matters enormously for small accommodation venues especially, where "near me" searches do a lot of the work for you.

Beyond Google, find and claim as many free local business listing services as exist in your area — directories, tourism boards, community marketplaces. Each one is a free door someone might walk through to find you.

Social Media Basics

Pick One Platform. Just One.

Trying to be everywhere at once is how people burn out and post nowhere consistently. Choose the one platform where your actual customers already spend time — Instagram for visual/lifestyle products, Facebook for local/older audiences, TikTok for younger and video-friendly, LinkedIn for services and B2B. Master one before you even consider a second.

Consistency Beats Cleverness

The algorithm rewards showing up, not going viral. Three ordinary posts a week for three months will outperform one brilliant post you agonised over for a month and then went quiet after. Pick a frequency you can actually sustain — even once a week, done every week, beats an ambitious plan you abandon by week three.

Content Pillars — So You're Never Starting From Blank

Pick 3–4 recurring themes and rotate through them, so you're never staring at a blank posting screen wondering what to say. A workable starting set for most small businesses:

- The product/service itself — photos, process, behind the scenes
- The problem it solves — what life looks like before and after
- You, the person — people buy from people, not from logos
- Social proof — a customer photo, a review, a "here's who this is for"

The Algorithm Doesn't Matter As Much As You Think

Every platform changes its rules constantly — chasing them is a losing game. What consistently works regardless of the current algorithm: genuine engagement (replying to every comment and DM like a real person), and showing your face occasionally, since people connect with people faster than they connect with product shots.

Free Marketing Resources

Everything below has a genuinely usable free tier — no hidden "free trial" traps.

Need	Free Tool	What It's For
Design & graphics	Canva (free tier)	Templates for posts, stories, simple logos — no design skill required
Video editing	CapCut (free tier)	Cut, caption, and format one video for TikTok, Reels, and Shorts without three separate edits
Stock photos	Unsplash / Pexels	Free, high-quality images when you don't have your own yet
Scheduling posts	Buffer (free tier)	Batch a week of posts in one sitting — and it suggests the best times to post based on when your specific audience is actually online
Hashtag research	Platform's own search bar	Type your topic, see what's suggested — free and more accurate than most paid tools
Link in bio	Linktree (free tier)	One link that leads to several — shop, contact, latest post
Basic analytics	Built-in Instagram/Facebook Insights	Free, and genuinely enough at this stage — ignore paid analytics tools for now
Email list	Mailchimp / Brevo (free tier)	Start collecting emails from day one — the list you own beats any platform you don't
Local visibility	Google Business Profile (free)	Puts a physical location or service on the map — essential if customers travel to you

One Video, Three Platforms

You don't need three different content strategies for TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts — you need one good vertical video, repurposed three times.

Film once, vertical, under 60 seconds. Edit it in CapCut — free, and built specifically for this kind of short-form cutting, captions, and trending audio. Then post the same core video to all three platforms, adjusting only what's cheap to adjust: the caption, the hashtags, and the on-screen text if a platform's audience needs a different hook.

This is the single highest-leverage move available to a small business with no marketing budget — one piece of content, three chances to be found, for the cost of one filming session.

Batch It, Schedule It, Repeat It

Don't create content daily — it's a recipe for burnout and inconsistency. Instead, pick one day a week (or fortnight) and batch everything: film, edit, write captions, the lot. Then load it all into Buffer and schedule it out across your posting days. Buffer's free tier will even suggest the best times to post for your specific content, based on when your audience is actually online, so you don't have to guess.

Fold this into your existing weekly list system: "batch content" becomes one recurring task on your Master List, on the day you've already decided is yours for admin and setup work — not a daily interruption competing with everything else.

Your One-Page Marketing Plan

Fill this in. It's meant to be short enough that you actually will.

Business name:

My business name is:

Who is your customer, specifically?

Not "everyone." One real type of person — what they need, what they're frustrated by, where they spend time online.

My customer is:

What's the one message?

If they remember only one sentence about you, what should it be?

My message is:

Which platform, and how often?

My platform and posting rhythm:

This month's content themes (pick 3-4):

My content pillars:

Budget this month (even R0 is a real answer):

My marketing budget:

How will I know it's working?

One or two things you'll actually check — not everything the analytics page shows you.

My success measure:

The Marketing Checklist

Foundations once. Setup once. Rhythm forever.

Foundations (Do Once, In Order)

	Task
☐	Business name chosen — short/catchy or location-based, no negative words
☐	Square logo made — crops cleanly to a circle
☐	Banner image made — motto or line about what I do, in my brand colours
☐	Rectangular letterhead version made for quotes, invoices, email signatures
☐	Business email address set up
☐	Handle claimed on every platform I might eventually use
☐	All existing portfolios, bios and old profiles updated
☐	Google Business Profile claimed (if physical/location-based)
☐	Local business listings found and claimed

Set Up & Launch

	Task
☐	Chosen platform, business/creator profile set up properly (bio, link, contact)
☐	Profile photo and cover image uploaded
☐	Link-in-bio tool set up with shop/contact links
☐	CapCut installed — first video edited and exported for TikTok, Reels & Shorts
☐	First week of posts batch-created
☐	Buffer set up, posting schedule loaded

Ongoing Rhythm

	Task
[]	Replied to every comment and DM within 24 hours
[]	Asked one happy customer for a quote or photo to share
[]	Email list sign-up set up, even if just a simple form
[]	One-page Marketing Plan filled in and pinned somewhere visible
[]	Batch content day added as a recurring task on my weekly list
[]	Checked in on the plan at the end of the month — adjusted one thing

*You don't need to be everywhere.
You need to be somewhere, consistently,
telling the truth about something good.*

— Lizzy