LIZZYLAND

# Zero to
# First Customer

*The practical checklist for starting any small business — from idea to your first sale.*

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· Before You Start ·

# You Found Your Purpose. Now Build The Thing.

This works for any small business — a craft stall, a service, a shop, a side hustle. It doesn't care what you're selling. It cares about the order you do things in, because the order is where most people get stuck.

You don't need a business degree. You need a first customer. Everything below is aimed at getting you there as directly as possible, then doing it again slightly better.

*Work through this in order. Tick as you go. Skipping ahead because a later step feels more exciting is exactly how good ideas stay ideas.*

# The Checklist

*In order. One at a time. No skipping to the fun bit.*

| | Step | What It Actually Means |
|---|---|---|
| [ ] | **1. Say what you're selling, in one sentence** | Not the mission statement. One plain sentence a stranger would understand: "I make X for Y." If you can't say it simply, you don't know it well enough yet to sell it. |
| [ ] | **2. Check the basic legal requirements** | Registering as a sole proprietor / small business, and any licence your specific trade needs, varies by country — a quick search for "starting a small business in [your country]" gets you the real answer. Don't let this become a stalling tactic. |
| [ ] | **3. Separate the money, even informally** | A second bank account, or at minimum a dedicated spreadsheet (see the Money Map). Business money and personal money need to stop being the same pile from day one — unpicking it later is miserable. |
| [ ] | **4. Price your first product or service** | Cost of materials/time + a margin that actually pays you. Underpricing to "get started" trains your first customers to expect underpriced work forever. Price it right the first time. |
| [ ] | **5. Make or prepare your first unit** | One real, sellable thing — not a prototype, not a "rough version." Something you'd actually hand to a stranger and take money for. |
| [ ] | **6. Build the simplest possible shop window** | A single page, an Instagram grid, a WhatsApp catalogue, a folder of photos on your phone. The simplest thing that lets someone see what you sell and how to buy it. Nothing fancier, not yet. |
| [ ] | **7. Tell ten people directly** | Not a post and a prayer. Ten actual messages to actual humans: "I've started doing X, here's a photo, want one?" Direct asks convert. Public posts mostly don't, not at zero followers. |
| [ ] | **8. Get the first sale** | Any sale. Full price, discounted, a friend, a stranger — doesn't matter. The first one is proof of concept, not proof of profitability. |
| [ ] | **9. Ask for feedback, and a testimonial if it went well** | One honest question: "what would make this better?" And if they loved it, ask if you can quote them. This becomes your marketing material before you've spent a cent on marketing. |
| [ ] | **10. Do it again, slightly better** | Adjust one thing — price, description, photo, delivery — based on what you just learned. Then repeat from step 6. This is the whole business, forever, just at increasing scale. |

# The Basics of Accounting (Light Touch)

*Just enough to not get caught out. Nothing you need a degree for.*

## Track Every Cost, From Day One

Two categories cover almost everything at this stage: cost of stock/materials (what it takes to make or source the thing) and cost of marketing (what it takes to tell people it exists). Write every single one down, even the small ones — a R40 spend you don’t track is a R40 hole in your actual profit that you’ll never see.

The Money Map spreadsheet has a Startup Costs tab built for exactly this — use it alongside this checklist rather than a separate notebook.

## Know Your Real Price

Real price = cost of materials + your time at a rate you’d actually accept + a margin. Most first-time sellers price on "what feels fair" and end up working for less than minimum wage once their own time is counted properly. Do the sum. Then price at the sum, not below it.

## Separate Money, Track Money, Leave a Trail

Every sale, every cost, in one place, from the first transaction — not backfilled from memory three months later. You don’t need software. You need a habit and a spreadsheet, which is exactly what the Money Map is for.

## Common First-Timer Mistakes

- Underpricing to "get started" — and staying underpriced because raising prices later feels awkward. Price it right the first time.
- Not tracking costs because the amounts feel too small to matter. They add up whether you track them or not — tracking just means you find out on your terms.
- Waiting for the perfect version before showing anyone. A slightly-rough first version that exists beats a perfect version that doesn't.
- Posting publicly and waiting, instead of messaging ten specific people directly. Direct asks convert; hoping does not.
- Treating the first sale as the finish line instead of the start of a loop. Sell, learn, adjust, sell again — that loop is the actual business.

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*You don't need permission, and you don't need everything figured out.*
*You need a first customer.*
*Go find them.*

*— Lizzy*

*Next: track every rand in The Money Map (spreadsheet), then get the word out with the DIY Marketing Plan — both live alongside this on the Wealth page.*