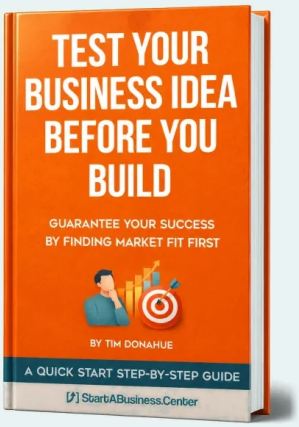
GUIDE 2 · QUICKIE WORKBOOK

Test Your Business Idea Before You Build

Summary version: Find out whether people will pay, before you build.

Work through it alongside the guide: **startabusiness.center/guideslive/guide-2-validate-idea-summary**



Founder name _____ **Date started** _____

Your business idea in one line _____

e.g. Weekly meal-prep kits for busy working parents, with dinner on the table in under 20 minutes.

How to use this workbook

1. **Read, then do.** Each chapter header links to the matching chapter of the guide. Read it, then complete the exercises here. Work in order: later chapters reuse your earlier answers.
2. **Answer with evidence, not hope.** Write what you have seen people do, not what you expect them to do. "Not tested yet" is an honest and useful answer.
3. **Follow the worked example.** Olive lines that start with *e.g.* follow Sarah, who is validating a $79-a-week meal-prep kit for busy working parents. Fields start empty; type your own. Plan on 2–4 weeks. Want more depth? Use the full Guide 2 workbook.
4. **Let the form do the math.** Shaded boxes are fields. Amber boxes calculate automatically in free Adobe Acrobat Reader; in other viewers, work out the formula shown and type the result. Save as you go.

Your roadmap

Tick each chapter when done; the verdict fills in from each chapter.

Ch.	The question	Focus	Done	Result (fills in)
01	Why validate before you build?	The mindset	☐	
02	Who exactly is your customer?	Customer profile	☐	
03	Can you find 10 people to talk to?	Find 10 people	☐	
04	What do customers really tell you?	Interviews	☐	
05	Will they act on your offer?	Offer test	☐	
06	Will they pay before it exists?	Pre-selling	☐	
07	What is the least you can build?	MVP	☐	
08	Can you land your first 5 customers?	First 5 customers	☐	
09	GO, PIVOT or NO-GO?	Your decision	☐	

01

STEP 1: WHY VALIDATE BEFORE YOU BUILD?

Why You Must Validate Before You Build

Read Chapter 1 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Write down the assumptions your idea rests on and how you'll test each one with real actions. Act like a scientist running experiments.

REAL VALIDATION: ACTIONS

- **Payment** before the product exists
- **Discovery calls** booked
- **Waitlist** emails
- **Pre-orders** or deposits

NOT VALIDATION: OPINIONS

- × Friends' opinions
- × Positive survey answers
- × Encouraging comments

Test the five fatal assumptions

For each one, write the action that would prove you right or wrong.

Fatal assumption	How you'll test it with real actions	Tested
People want this		☐
Friends who say they'll buy will buy		☐
Customers will be easy to reach		☐
My price is right		☐
If I build it, they will come		☐

e.g. Sarah: "My price is right" → offer 10 founding spots at $69 a week and count how many people pay

WHY IT'S WORTH IT Finding out in a few weeks is far cheaper than a $20,000, year-long mistake.

Chapter 1: pass or fail?

○ **Pass**
Every assumption has a real-action test.

○ **Fail**
You're still relying on opinions. Plan action-based tests first.

02

STEP 2: WHO EXACTLY IS YOUR CUSTOMER?

Who Exactly Is Your Customer?

Read Chapter 2 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Be specific enough to point at a stranger in a coffee shop and say "that's my customer," then name 10 real people who fit.

VAGUE

× "People who like coffee."

USEFUL

- "Remote workers in their 30s who drink iced lattes at 2 p.m."

Profile item	Your customer	e.g. Sarah
Name		*Jessica*
Age, gender, location		*34, female, suburban Denver*
Income level		*$85K household*
Job title or role		*Marketing manager, partly remote*
Daily routine		*School pickup at 3:30; dinner chaos 4–7 p.m.*
Biggest frustration		*Too tired to cook; guilty about takeout*
What they've tried, and why it failed		*HelloFresh (too complicated); frozen meals (kids won't eat them)*
What they spend now		*$60–80 a week on takeout*
Where they spend time online		*Mom Facebook groups, Instagram*
Where they spend time offline		*School pickup, Target, soccer games*
The problem in their own words		*"By dinnertime I have nothing left."*

2.1 What problem do they feel every day?

e.g. The 5:30 p.m. dinner scramble.

2.2 Where do they already spend money on it, and why would they switch to you?

e.g. $60–80 a week on takeout; she'd switch for something as easy but healthy.

2.3 Where are they, and how will you reach them?

e.g. Parent Facebook groups and the school pickup line.

The ultimate test: name 10 real people who fit

If you can't, your target is too vague. Narrow it until you can.

#	Name	Where you know them from	Fits
1			☐
2			☐
3			☐
4			☐
5			☐
6			☐
7			☐
8			☐
9			☐
10			☐

Chapter 2: pass or fail?

○ **Pass**
A specific profile, and 10 real people who fit it.

○ **Fail**
You can't name 10 people. Narrow the profile.

03

STEP 3: CAN YOU FIND 10 PEOPLE TO TALK TO?

Find 10 People To Talk To

Read Chapter 3 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Line up 10 conversations with strangers who fit your profile, not friends or family, within one week.

3.1 Where will you look? Tick every place your customers actually are.

- ☐ Facebook groups
- ☐ Subreddits
- ☐ LinkedIn groups (B2B)
- ☐ Forums or Slack groups
- ☐ YouTube comments
- ☐ Amazon or Yelp reviews
- ☐ Meetups, local events
- ☐ Co-working, conferences

#	Where you'll find your 10 people (specific group, page or event)
1	
2	
3	

e.g. Sarah: Denver Moms Facebook group | two school PTA pages | r/MealPrepSunday

3.2 Your outreach message: a 15-minute chat, a small thank-you, and no sales pitch.

e.g. "I'm researching how working parents handle weeknight dinners. Could I buy you a coffee (or send a $10 gift card) for 15 minutes? No sales pitch."

Track your 10 conversations

Goal: all 10 scheduled within one week.

#	Name	Where found	Date of chat	Booked
1				☐
2				☐
3				☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐
7				☐
8				☐
9				☐
10				☐

Chapter 3: pass or fail?

○ **Pass**
10 conversations with strangers are booked.

○ **Fail**
Fewer than 10. Send more messages or try another place.

04

STEP 4: WHAT DO CUSTOMERS REALLY TELL YOU?

How To Interview Potential Customers

Read Chapter 4 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Run 15–20 minute interviews about their pain, what they've tried and what they spend. Open by saying it isn't a sales call.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Tell me about the last time you struggled with [problem].
- What have you tried? What worked, and what didn't?
- If you could wave a magic wand, what would the perfect solution look like?
- How much time or money do you spend on this now?
- If a solution offered [benefit], would that be valuable?
- What would you be willing to pay?
- Close: would you try it if I built it?

LISTEN FOR

- **Green:** struggles with it constantly
- **Green:** has already spent money on it
- **Green:** asks when they can try it
- **Red:** "That's interesting," no urgency
- **Red:** spends nothing on it
- **Red:** "Maybe someday"

People are poor at predicting what they'd pay, so treat "what would you pay?" as a hint. What they already spend is the stronger evidence.

After your interviews

	Your answer	e.g. Sarah
Most common pain point		*Too exhausted to cook on weeknights*
What they spend now		*$60–80 a week on takeout*
What they said they'd pay for your solution		*$60–80 a week*

Calculation or input	Your answer	e.g. Sarah
Interviews completed		*10*
Showed strong interest (green flags)		*8*

The Quickie Guide gives no cut-off here; the full Guide 2 uses 7 of 10 as the sign you're on track.

Chapter 4: pass or fail?

○ **Pass**
Most people showed real pain, and you know what they spend.

○ **Fail**
Mostly polite interest. Revisit the problem or the audience.

05

STEP 5: WILL THEY ACT ON YOUR OFFER?

Testing Your Offer: Will They Actually Pay?

Read Chapter 5 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Choose one test, set a target and a deadline, and compare your result with the guide's benchmarks.

5.1 Your testing method

- ○ **Landing page**
  Drive 100–200 visitors. 5%+ signing up is strong; 2–5% decent; under 2% weak.
- ○ **Direct outreach**
  Message 50 target people. 10%+ positive replies is strong; under 5% weak.
- ○ **Community post**
  Post where customers gather; count signups, questions and requests for info.

Target: reach _____ *e.g. 200 people*

Goal: signups or replies _____ *e.g. 15*

Deadline _____ *e.g. Nov 15*

Your results

Calculation or input	Your answer	e.g. Sarah
People reached (visitors, or people messaged)		*300 visitors*
Signups or positive replies		*20*
Response rate = signups ÷ people reached		*6.7%*

The Quickie Guide gives no number for community posts: judge by how many people sign up or ask for details without being asked.

Chapter 5: pass or fail?

- ○ **Pass**
  Your result hit the strong (or decent) benchmark with real actions.
- ○ **Fail**
  A weak result. Change the message, price or audience and retest.

06

STEP 6: WILL THEY PAY BEFORE IT EXISTS?

Pre-Selling & Taking Deposits Before You Build

Read Chapter 6 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Ask people to pay, or put down a deposit, before you build. It's the gold standard of validation.

6.1 Your pre-sell option

- ○ **Full pre-sale**
  10–20% early-bird discount; deliver in 2–4 weeks.
- ○ **Deposit**
  25–50% up front, refundable if you can't deliver.
- ○ **Pre-order, no charge**
  Weakest: many won't follow through when it's time to pay.

Calculation or input	Your answer	e.g. Sarah
Regular price		*$79 a week*
Early-bird price		*$69 a week*
Discount (guide: 10–20%)		*12.7%*
Pre-sell goal: paying customers		*10*
Actual paying customers (or deposits)		*5*

Delivery timeline

e.g. First delivery in 3 weeks

6.2 Warning signs. Tick any you saw.

- ☐ Interest, but no emails or payments
- ☐ Heavy pushback on price
- ☐ "I'll wait" with no contact info

No pre-sales yet but 20+ waitlist signups with contact details? The guide says that's still worth pursuing.

Chapter 6: pass or fail?

- ○ **Pass**
  5 or more paid up front (or 20+ waitlist signups with contact details).
- ○ **Fail**
  Nobody paid and few left contact details.

07

STEP 7: WHAT IS THE LEAST YOU CAN BUILD?

Building Your Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

Read Chapter 7 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Build only the core solution to the main problem, deliver it to your first 5 customers in days or weeks, and learn from their feedback.

SARAH'S MVP

- 5 pre-portioned meal kits
- Made in her home kitchen
- Delivered in her own car
- Simple paper labels

NOT HER MVP

- × A custom app
- × Branded packaging
- × 30 recipes
- × A delivery fleet

#	My MVP will include (only the essentials)
1	
2	
3	

7.1 I will NOT include (for now):

e.g. An app, custom packaging, a big menu, subscriptions.

I can build this in _____ **Delivered to customers** _____

e.g. 2 weeks *e.g. 5*

7.2 What did your first customers say, and what will you change?

e.g. 4 of 5 loved it; two asked for kid-sized portions. Adding those next week.

Chapter 7: pass or fail?

○ **Pass**
A lean MVP is in the hands of real customers, and you have their feedback.

○ **Fail**
Still building, or customers didn't find it useful.

08

STEP 8: CAN YOU LAND YOUR FIRST 5 CUSTOMERS?

Read Chapter 8 in the guide →

Getting Your First 5 Customers Through Direct Outreach

YOUR GOAL Win your first 5 paying customers by personal outreach: no ads or social media yet.

- ☐ **List 50 potential customers** (your 10 interviewees plus others who fit)
- ☐ **Draft a personal message** (below)
- ☐ **Follow up once after 3 days**; then move on
- ☐ **Over-deliver**, ask for feedback, and turn customers into advocates

8.1 Your message: what you're launching, who it's for, and the first-5 offer.

e.g. "I'm launching weekly meal-prep kits for busy parents and want 5 founding families. Your first week is half price. Interested?"

Calculation or input	Your answer	e.g. Sarah
Goal: paying customers		*5*
People contacted		*50*
Paying customers		*6*
Conversion = paying ÷ contacted		*12%*

Goal date

e.g. Dec 1

Benchmarks are for 50 messages: 5+ customers excellent, 2–4 decent, 0–1 weak.

Chapter 8: pass or fail?

- ○ **Pass**
  5 or more paying customers from direct outreach.
- ○ **Fail**
  0–1 customers from 50 messages.

09

STEP 9: GO, PIVOT OR NO-GO?

The Go/No-Go Decision

Read Chapter 9 in the guide →

YOUR GOAL Tick the signals your evidence shows, answer five honest questions, and make the call.

GO signals

- ☐ 5+ paying customers from outreach
- ☐ Customers came back for more
- ☐ 3+ customers referred others
- ☐ Landing page at 5%+
- ☐ Customers called the problem urgent
- ☐ Little pushback on price

Ticked:

PIVOT signals

- ☐ 1–2 paying customers, then no more
- ☐ MVP users didn't come back
- ☐ High interest, low conversion
- ☐ Pushback on price
- ☐ Real problem, but the solution doesn't fit

Ticked:

NO-GO signals

- ☐ 100+ contacted, fewer than 5 customers
- ☐ Landing page under 1%
- ☐ MVP users didn't come back
- ☐ Nobody had ever spent money on the problem
- ☐ 3+ pivots without traction

Ticked:

#	Question	Your answer	e.g. Sarah
1	How many paying customers did you land?		*6*
2	How many came back for a second purchase?		*4*
3	What was your landing page conversion rate?		*6.7%*
4	Did they call the problem urgent, or nice to have?		*Urgent*
5	What did they say to "Would you buy this again?"		*4 of 6: "yes, sign me up"*

Would you give your best friend this advice, on this same data?

e.g. Yes: go, but add kid-sized portions first.

Make the call

○ GO
Set up the business properly (Guide 3) and start finding customers in earnest.

○ PIVOT
Change one thing (price, customer, offer or positioning) and test with 10 more people.

○ NO-GO
Take what you learned into your next idea. That's not failure.

Your next step, and when

e.g. GO: start Guide 3 and form the business this month.