GUIDE

The Small Business Gap Guide

Eight places a small business leaks time, money and customers, a one-week fix for each, and how to score yourself.

How to use this guide

Every small business has gaps: places where time, money or customers slip away without anyone noticing. This guide covers the eight areas we look at in our Gap Meter assessment. For each one you will find what the gap usually looks like, a fix anyone can do in one week, and when it makes sense to get help.

- Read the eight areas and note the ones that sound familiar.
- Score yourself on the printable table at the end of this guide.
- Start with your three highest-scoring areas. Do one one-week fix at a time.
- Score yourself again in a month and compare.

> This guide is general information, not legal, tax or financial advice. For questions about taxes, filings, contracts or borrowing, talk to a qualified professional where you operate.

AREA 1 OF 8

Finding customers

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- Most new work comes from referrals you cannot predict.
- You cannot say where last month's customers came from.
- Slow weeks catch you by surprise.

WHEN TO GET HELP

You have done this and still cannot keep your calendar full, or you want to try a new way of finding customers without wasting money.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. List your last 20 customers and how each one found you.
2. Circle the two sources that brought the most, or the best, customers.
3. Write down in one sentence why those customers said yes.
4. Ask five happy customers for a referral or a review.
5. Put one protected hour on your calendar each week for your best source.

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AREA 2 OF 8

Follow-up

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- Quotes go out and nobody follows up.
- Inquiries sit unanswered in email, texts or voicemail.
- You lose jobs to whoever answered first.

WHEN TO GET HELP

More inquiries come in than you can answer, or nobody covers replies while you are on a job.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. Gather every open quote and inquiry from the last 30 days into one list.
2. Contact each one this week, even if only to close it out.
3. Set a rule: every inquiry gets an answer within one business day.
4. Write two short reply templates: one for new inquiries, one for quote follow-ups.
5. Check the list every morning for five minutes.

AREA 3 OF 8

Pricing

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- You have not changed your prices in years.
- You are busy but not making much.
- Your prices are set by what a competitor charges, or you discount to win.

WHEN TO GET HELP

You cannot work out your true costs, or a price change affects contracts or many existing customers.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. List your five most common jobs or products.
2. For each, write the true cost: materials, time at a fair wage, travel and a share of overhead.
3. Compare each price to its true cost.
4. Pick the one with the thinnest margin and set a new price for new customers.
5. Write one sentence that explains the value behind that price.

AREA 4 OF 8

Cash flow

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- You are profitable on paper but money is tight every month.
- Invoices go out late.
- You do not know today what customers owe you.

WHEN TO GET HELP

You cannot cover the next eight weeks, or you are thinking about borrowing. Talk to a qualified accountant or adviser.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. List everyone who owes you money and how much.
2. Send every overdue invoice a polite reminder.
3. Write down the next eight weeks of money you know is coming in and going out.
4. Start invoicing on the day the work is finished.
5. Move a small, fixed share of every payment into a separate reserve.

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AREA 5 OF 8

Books and paperwork

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- Receipts live in a shoebox, a truck or a camera roll.
- The books get caught up once a year.
- You cannot find a contract, license or registration quickly.

WHEN TO GET HELP

Your books are more than a few months behind, or you have tax or legal filing questions. Talk to a qualified bookkeeper or accountant.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. Pick one place for receipts: one folder or one app.
2. Photograph and file this month's receipts.
3. Set 30 minutes each week to sort them.
4. List your key documents (registration, licenses, insurance, contracts) and where each one is.
5. Put every renewal and filing date on your calendar.

AREA 6 OF 8

Your time

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- You are the only one who can do most things.
- Evenings go to admin.
- You cannot take a day off without the phone.

WHEN TO GET HELP

The list of things someone else could do is long, and you are ready for AI office support or a hire.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. Track your time for three days in 30-minute blocks.
2. Mark each block: only I can do this, I could teach this, or a system could do this.
3. Pick one task that repeats every week and write its steps down.
4. Hand it to someone, or turn it into a template or reminder.
5. Block one protected half-day for work on the business, not in it.

AREA 7 OF 8

Online presence

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- Customers cannot find you when they search.
- Your website is out of date, or there is none.
- Listings show the wrong hours, phone number or address.

WHEN TO GET HELP

You have no website, or one you cannot edit, or you need it to work for customers in other languages or countries.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. Search for your business name, and for your main service plus your town, the way a customer would.
2. Correct your hours, phone and address on every listing you control.
3. Make sure the first screen of your website says what you do, where and how to reach you.
4. Ask three recent customers for a review.
5. Post one useful update about your work.

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AREA 8 OF 8

Funding and grants

WHAT THE GAP LOOKS LIKE

- You have never looked for grants or programs.
- You do not know which ones fit your business.
- Applications stall because a document, a registration or a website is missing.

WHEN TO GET HELP

The requirements are unclear, the application is large, or you need a written plan to support it. No one can promise an award, so be wary of anyone who does.

A ONE-WEEK FIX ANYONE CAN DO

1. Write one paragraph that says what your business does and who it helps.
2. Gather what most programs ask for: registration documents, ownership details, a short budget and a working website.
3. Search the small-business programs in your town, region and country, and list three that fit.
4. Write down each one's deadline and requirements.
5. Start the smallest application first.

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PRINTABLE SELF-SCORE

Score yourself

Score each area from **0** (this is handled) to **5** (this costs us every week). Circle or tick one box per row. Add the eight scores and multiply by 2.5 for a gap score from 0 to 100, where a higher score means more room to improve. This paper version is a rough guide; the free Gap Meter self-check asks 8 questions and takes about two minutes.

Area	A 5 looks like	0	1	2	3	4	5	Notes
Finding customers	We rely on luck for new customers							
Follow-up	Inquiries and quotes go unanswered							
Pricing	Our prices do not cover true costs							
Cash flow	Money is tight and invoices are late							
Books and paperwork	Records are behind and hard to find							
Your time	Everything depends on the owner							
Online presence	Customers cannot find or reach us							
Funding and grants	We are not ready to apply for anything							
Total	Add the eight scores							_____ of 40
Gap score	Total × 2.5							_____ of 100

Your top three areas to work on first

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Date scored: _____ Score again on: _____

Want a second pair of eyes?

Request a gap assessment and we will review all eight areas with you and write an action plan ranked by impact. Call **+1 980-234-5310** · Email **premierchoiceintelligence@gmail.com** · Visit **premierchoiceintelligence.com (preview)**
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